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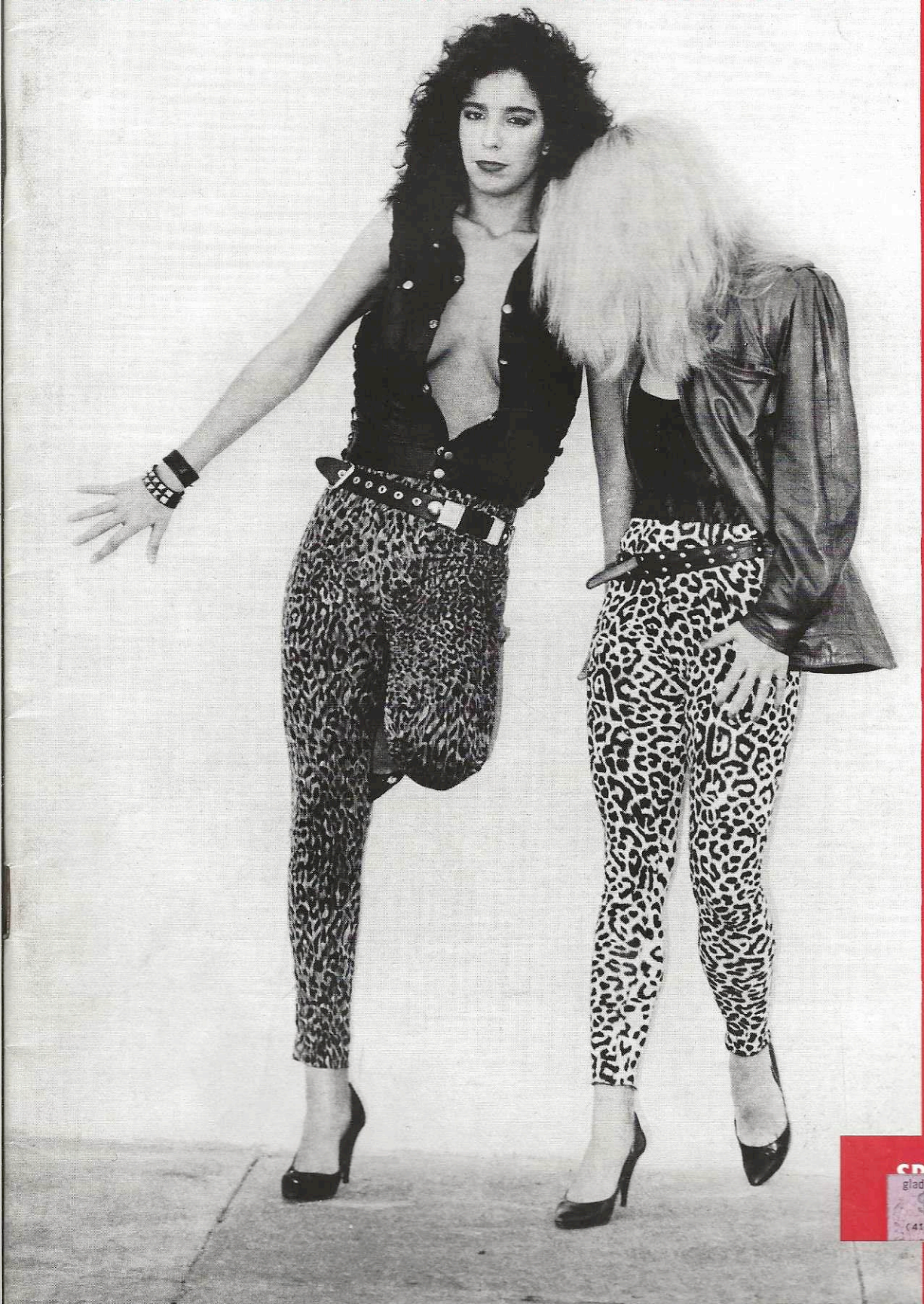

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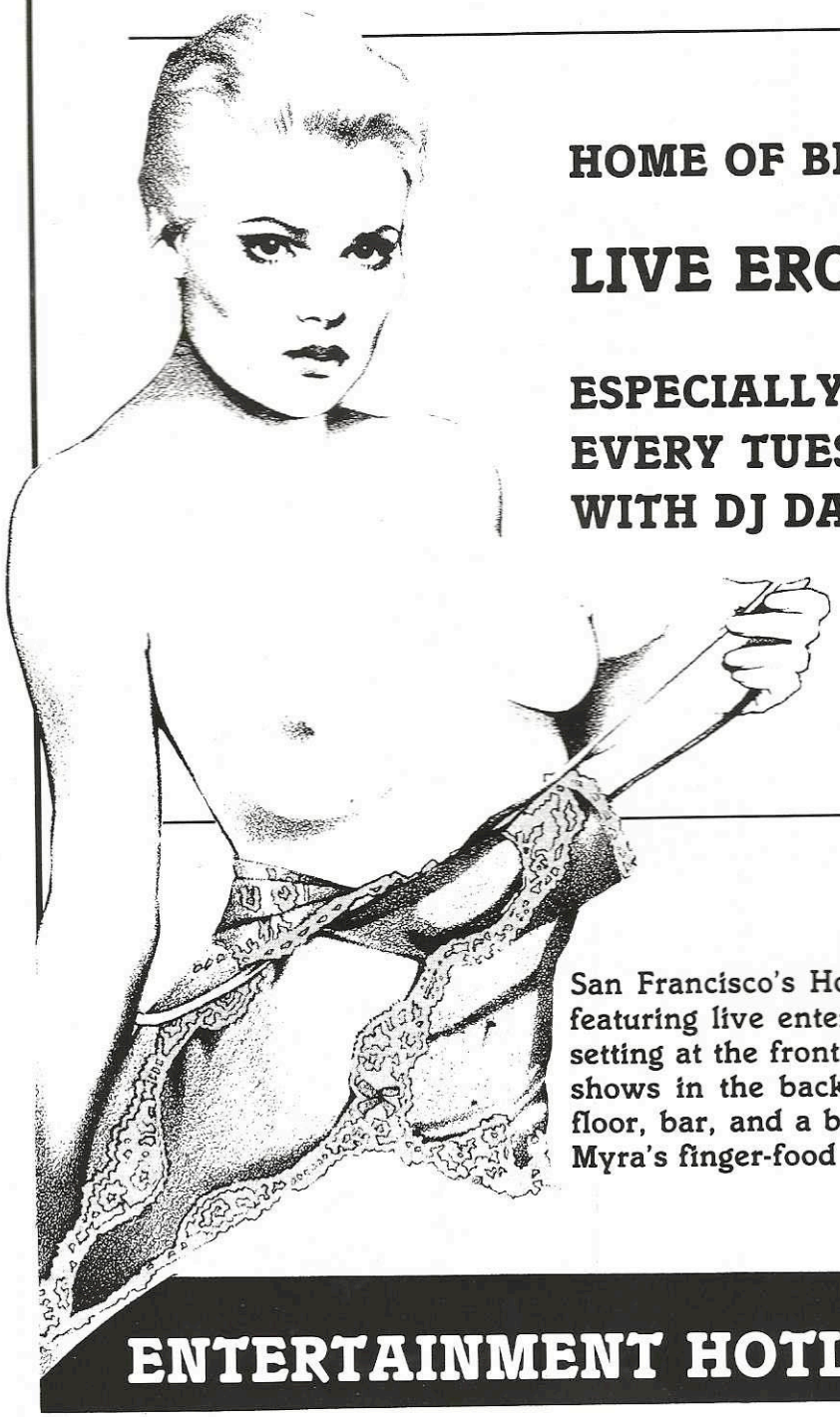

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Spring 1985

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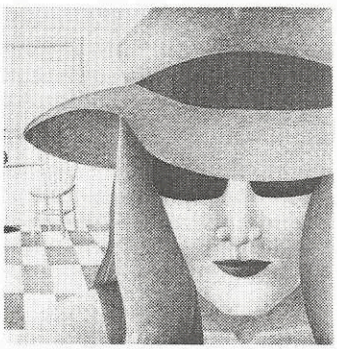

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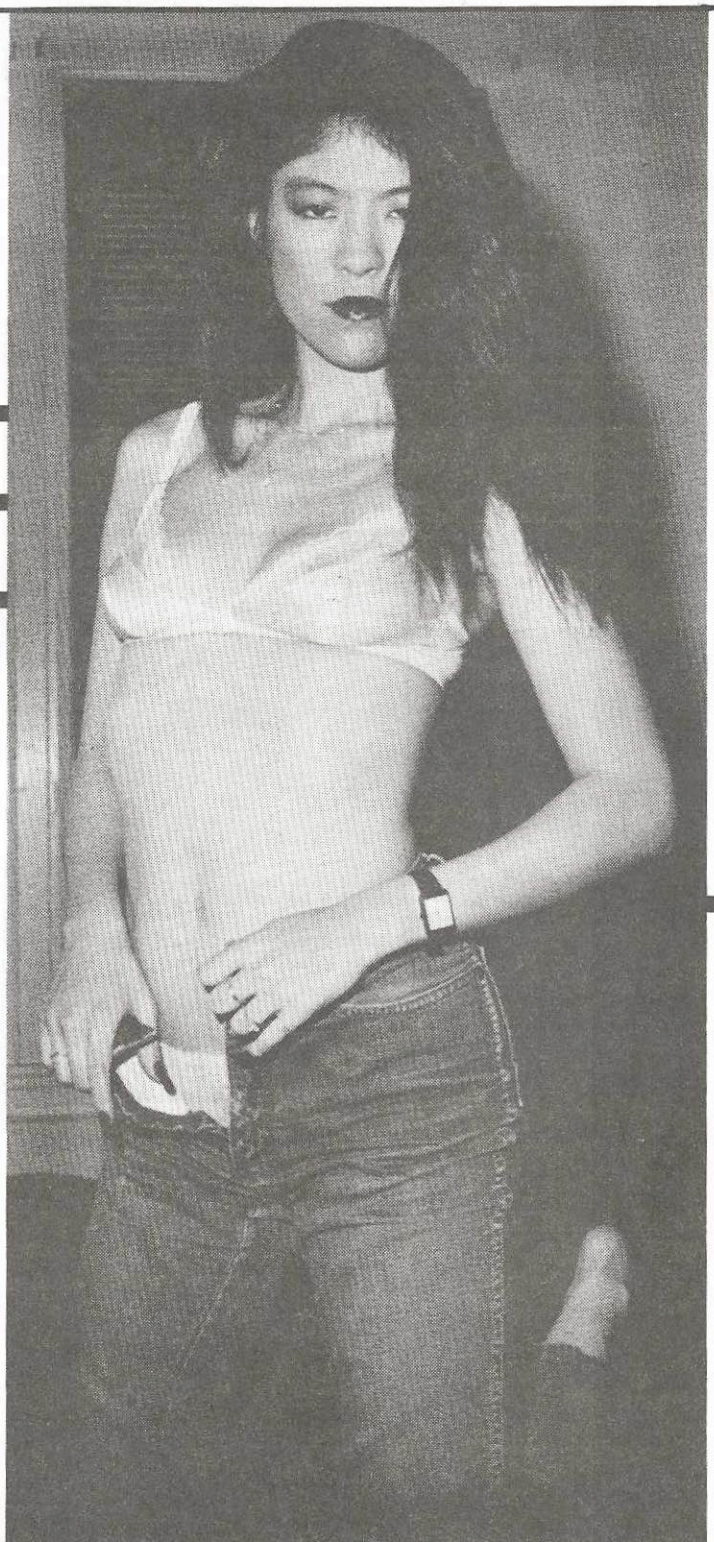

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LETTERS LOVE/LUST/LONGING

I love your magazine and reading the "hot" stories has inspired me to write. I hope your readers enjoy this.

To "V":

My come juices poured into her mouth. I was conscious of her pulling away from surprise and then feeling her mouth on my cunt again drinking all that was coming out of me. It was so intense I couldn't stop and her mouth never left my cunt. I finally reached out to her to bring her lips to mine and to lick my come from her mouth. To taste my juices on her lips, her tongue, to suck it off. "I love drinking your come," she said. I just looked in her eyes and smiled.

Keep up the good work. The more explicit the better.

Arlene K.
San Francisco

L.L.
Ithaca, NY

Needless to say, your publication is an outstanding one. Below are a few criticisms/comments/suggestions. None are intended as negative digs; their contribution, I trust, will add to the continued life of your desperately needed publication.

I didn't enjoy the Winter, 1985 issue as much as the Fall, 1984 issue. The Winter issue seemed to lack both intensity and was much too brief. Additionally, I noticed the following:

1) Way too many proofreading errors. I found this both annoying and distracting.

2) The pictures you feature are hot, but they lack detail and sparkle. They all seem to suffer from muddy contrast levels. Especially the first photo in "The Picnic", the top's entire right arm disappears into blackness.

3) I'd also like to read more of your subscriber's fantasies. Are you publishing what you're receiving or are you holding back on us?

4) I've read a few comments/fantasies that include references to Black dykes (esp. leather dykes)—just how integrated is the "adventurous lesbian" sexual scene on the West Coast? I'd like to see an article treating this subject and more pictures generally of non-white women.

5) Finally, I was very pleased to find that you run ads for sex tapes. Are there any phone sex services or dyke equivalents to the gay male j.o. clubs?

F.S.
Jackson, MS

At last! I just discovered you through a friend at the "Humanspace Books" store in Phoenix.

I am still so overwhelmed from the only issue that I have (Winter, 1985) that all I can do right now is wish you nothing but the best and thank you for just being.

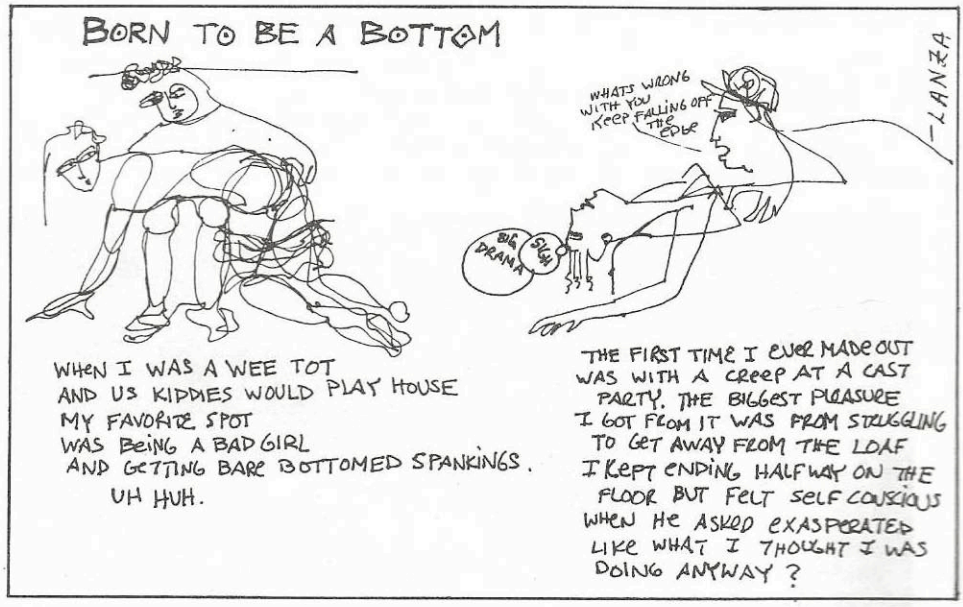
C.L.
Reedsbury, WI

I nearly passed out when I saw the cover of Pepper on your Winter issue. Tell her I have fallen in love!

Sally Binford has a rich and fascinating history. Never can I read such a candid and honest account of one's sexual experiences. People just won't talk about it, such a shame. Please thank her for the courage to share it with us.

I am tempted to make a special trip to San Francisco just to have a date with those two knock-outs in the ad for Indecent Exposure!

P.R.
Tampa, FL


BORN TO BE A BOTTOM
LANZA
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU KEEP FALLING OFF THE EDGE
BIG DRAMA
SIGH
WHEN I WAS A WEE TOT AND US KIDDIES WOULD PLAY HOUSE MY FAVORITE SPOT WAS BEING A BAD GIRL AND GETTING BARE BOTTOMED SPANKINGS. UH HUH.
THE FIRST TIME I EVER MADE OUT WAS WITH A CREEP AT A CAST PARTY. THE BIGGEST PLEASURE I GOT FROM IT WAS FROM STRUGGLING TO GET AWAY FROM THE LOAF I KEPT ENDING HALFWAY ON THE FLOOR BUT FELT SELF CONSCIOUS WHEN HE ASKED EXASPERATED LIKE WHAT I THOUGHT I WAS DOING ANYWAY ?

I just finished reading your magazines (Fall and Winter, 1984), and it left me exhausted, exhilarated and very moist. What a joy! Yes, I loved it! I could not wait to sit down and write to you.

Honey Lee Cortrell was appealing and strong. (I wonder if she knows that. I already saw her picture on the wall of some friends' apartment.) The leather clothing pictures were interesting and exciting. The stories were delightful. Susie Bright's "Toys for Us" column is much needed advice from an expert.

I also came with "Sara Jean Harper" last night and again this morning.

Barbara Ruth's "Olivia" was disgustingly, marvelously written. I am sure it has helped many women to appreciate their menses.

I loved the emphasis on women's different sexual experiences. It is not easy to be a lesbian who likes erotica. That is one reason why we dearly need your magazine, written about us and by us, so we can see ourselves accurately reflected.

Theresa H.
Texas

Hugs to you all for sending me the Winter issue flash fast! When I pulled the magazine out and saw the amazing picture of Pepper on the front cover, I was in Dyke Paradise! So where do I join her fan club? Does she want a pen pal? Can you send *her* to me flash fast? Pepper, if you're out there–I want you! NOW!

I enjoyed the rest of the magazine too, as usual, except for one article, and that was the interview with Sally Binford. You say that *On Our Backs* is a lesbian magazine, but the interview is with a woman who's obviously a bi-sexual, and talks at length about fucking men. I found it very offensive to read about a woman fucking men in a lesbian sex magazine and, in my opinion, it has no place in *On Our Backs*. There are plenty of other places to read about het or bi sex, if that's what someone really wants to do.

So all of you keep up the great work! I can hardly wait until your spring issue with the promised photo spread of the burlesque dancer.

L.L.

I have read both issues of *On Our Backs*, Summer and Fall, front to back many times, and they still never fail to make my cunt lips swell with excitement or make me very wet. I have been searching everywhere for such a magazine as yours, and I am truly glad it exists.

Continued on page 5

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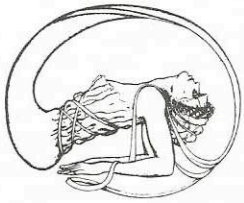

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Continued from page 3

Our "counterparts" have always had their s/m publications on a regular basis, such as *Drummer* and others, but until *On Our Backs* was created, we lesbian and bi s/m-oriented women had to do without the female-oriented print. I know that I have learned much from the two issues as I am sure other lesbian and bi women have also. I am truly looking forward to many more issues.

Please continue to bring us top-notch, cunt watering, s/m lesbian articles, poems, true life adventures, etc. in the future. Keep up the good work and keep your clits warm, moist, and hard! You gals are just super!

M.H.
San Diego

I have been watching for a public response to your magazine in Minneapolis, but so far there has been none. I know a Brother's Touch, the local gay bookstore, carries it. They have a greater selection of lesbian and gay reading materials than Amazon bookstore, the local feminist bookstore who is not carrying *On Our Backs*.

As for me personally, *On Our Backs* turns me on, offends me, and makes me wonder if sex is just a vice. I enjoy it and it challenges my judgements about what images are erotic and which are pornographic. Above all I'm thrilled to hear these questions being asked by women who are not in fear of heterosexuality and masculinity. This is a time to embrace out masculine selves–as we move on from all the anger. Good work.

C.T.
Minneapolis, MN

When I first heard about *On Our Backs* I was excited. Finally, no more searching straight mags for just a hint of two women getting it on together. But I was put off by the s/m writings. Then I received the fall issue and bingo, here we go again. Four pages of women in leather–two being looked on by a whip-bearing dyke, two ads for leather stores–the women not just in leather but bearing s/m equipment! An ad for the Janus Society, one for *Coming to Power, Writings by S/M Lesbians*, a personal ad from two s/m dykes, and even an article that has the women verbally abused.

Granted being tied-up can be arousing, and leather vests or panties exciting, but whips, chains and things of that sort? I think you are going too far by carrying so much of what excites some but turns-off others.

Anna
San Francisco

Your magazine is the most honest publication I've ever read. Quite extraordinary in these days of pc (politically correct) politics.

L.O.
Denver, CO

I first saw your magazine in Womanbooks in New York. It was the Summer, 1984 edition and I loved it!! Any magazine that can provoke outraged reactions from me has to be all right.

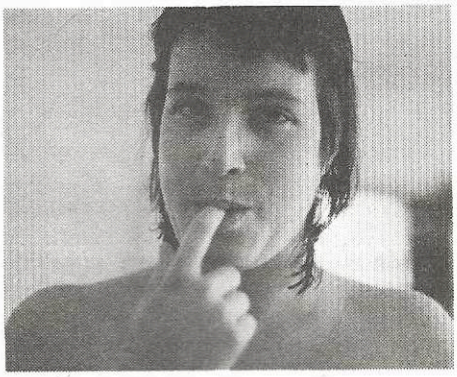
So, I purchased the next issue and was not disappointed. Finally, I asked for a subscription for Christmas.

Well, your latest issue was a disappointment. I can't tell you how boring interviews with people are when you're expecting a sequel to "Anonymous Letters" or "Sarah Jean Harper Came Last Night". I mean, I almost felt as if I were reading the latest issue of *Womanews*!! (That is not a compliment.)

Hoping that the latest issue was an aberration, I am, hopefully yours,

N.C.
New York, NY ◄

BUST AND LUST



SUSIE BRIGHT

Susie Sexpert Reports:

Move over, Barbara Walters! I always knew that one day I'd break an exclusive scoop in this column, and here it is. Marilyn Chambers, famous porn star (''Behind the Green Door'', ''Insatiable'') and former Ivory Snow cover girl, was recently arrested here in San Francisco for her dance act at Mitchell Bros. burlesque theater. Two dozen police apparently found her behavior on the floor way too lewd for public consumption.

What the public doesn't know is that only hours before her arrest, Mitchell Bros. called Good Vibrations, the women's vibrator store where I work, with an urgent request. Marilyn needed *two* Hitachi Magic Wand vibrators, immediately, and we were to send them in a cab to make the speediest delivery.

Any of you who are married to this particular vibrator know that one alone is enough to knock your socks off, and it's no wonder that Marilyn became a little more rambunctious than usual. By the way, all charges were dropped, and hopefully Ms. Chambers is enjoying her vibrations in peace.

Speaking of lewd, I have another tasty tidbit to pass our readers' way. If you enjoy talking dirty, or listening to filthy sweet nothings in your ear, *Hot Woman Talk Tapes* is right up your alley. These cassette tapes are the brainchild of Arlene Krantz, a devout erotic entrepreneur, who recorded six different sex scenes guaranteed to burn your ears. I hate to admit it, but my favorite was ''Dawn Wants You to be her First Woman''. I usually don't let myself dwell on the joys of bringing a straight woman out, but just this once . . . Arlene covers several different erotic themes, and she would love to hear from you about what you'd like to hear.

This spring issue brings us two juicy letters from troubled butches:

Dear Susie Sexpert,

Until recently I considered myself just another butch dyke. I'm into 501 jeans, leather, moderate S/M, and pretty women. However, I've found a new fetish that is very unsettling. While at home one day, curiosity prompted me to put my dildo in my 501's and wear it around the house. The contrived bulge was a major turn-on; I liked the way I looked and I liked the way I felt. Rubbing my hand over my prominent crotch, I had an explosive orgasm.

My strong reaction to this experience raised a few questions: How do I incorporate this desire into my feminist ideology? As a feminist with a degree in psychology, it was my belief that Freud lost all credence after his discourse on Penis Envy. (Maybe I should re-evaluate my criticism of Dr. Freud's theory.) Am I alone, or do other lesbians have similar fantasies? Would I be the object of severe ridicule if I were to wear my fantasy out in public? Please tell me all you can about this subject.

Jumpin' Jacki

Dear J-J,

What a hot little treat your letter was! I think many fretful butches have had similar feelings as you.

To begin with, the real question is how can feminist ideology incorporate *your* desires? As helpful as feminism has been in explaining gender differences, it is not a philosophy that explains sexuality, or the erotic.

Understanding why you are making 59¢ to every man's dollar is hardly the jumping-off point to determine the source of your lust. What women's liberation (as us old fashioneds call it) has given to us sexually is the idea we should be in control of our own bodies, that we are capable and credible in determining our sexual preferences.

I don't think you have penis envy, I think you have dildo envy. How many times do I have to repeat that simple phrase: A dildo is *not* a penis. Look at both items sometime and you'll notice immediately what the differences are. For starters, a dildo is a sexual plaything: it is not attached to a human body who has to live with it till death. Keep in mind that it was rubbing your play-cock against your *clitoris* that got you off.

Do you realize that dildoes are one of the few pieces of sexual turf that dykes are associated with? Everyone uses them, but it's us lezzies that made them famous. It's your goddess-given right to use dildoes; it's your damn heritage, in fact. Will you be ridiculed if you pack a dildo in public? Well, you might be the source of more dildo envy. But I think your pleasure might be worth it. In fact, there's this lovely little restaurant I know, where we could meet, and . . .

Lovingly,

Susie Sexpert

Dear Susie Sexpert,

Please explain the physio/sexual/social dynamics when ''butch meets butch''. I have seen extremely repelling reactions and I've also witnessed very positive results. What are your comments?

New Jersey

Dear Jersey,

My friend Fanny Fatale, outspoken lesbian stripper and self-defined butch/femme expert, begged me to let her answer this important question.

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Fanny says: "When butch meets butch and it's positive, their masculine psyches say, 'You're like me. That turns me on (sexual). Let's get it on (social).' Sometimes butch meets butch and they will look the other way for a femme. I learned the hard way that you cannot judge a butch by her cover. They are not all attracted to femmes. Even if they are, they are not all (indeed, few are) necessarily aggressive in the sack. That can be confusing and complicated at first, but realizing that butch/butch or femme/femme is just as common as butch/femme, makes for happier relationships in the long run.

What would a butch say to another butch if they were talking dirty?

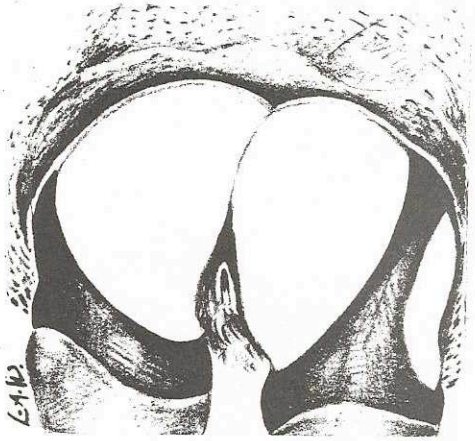
'I'll suck your dick if you suck mine,' or

'I know that underneath you're just a cunt who wants to be laid down and fucked, so *bend over*.'

Here's a thought to make your brain go tilt: There are butches who dress in feminine clothes because it turns them on. Who is really in drag? A butch in masculine clothes or a butch wearing feminine clothes? What will determine drag in our enlightened sexual future?

Here's another: Half of the lesbians who work in the sex industry as erotic dancers or prostitutes are butches. Butches in feminine disguise. To the trained femme eye, this is as obvious as nakedness."

Thank you, Fanny, for this comprehensive answer. This is Susie Sexpert, bidding you 'Clits Up!' till our next summer issue. ◄



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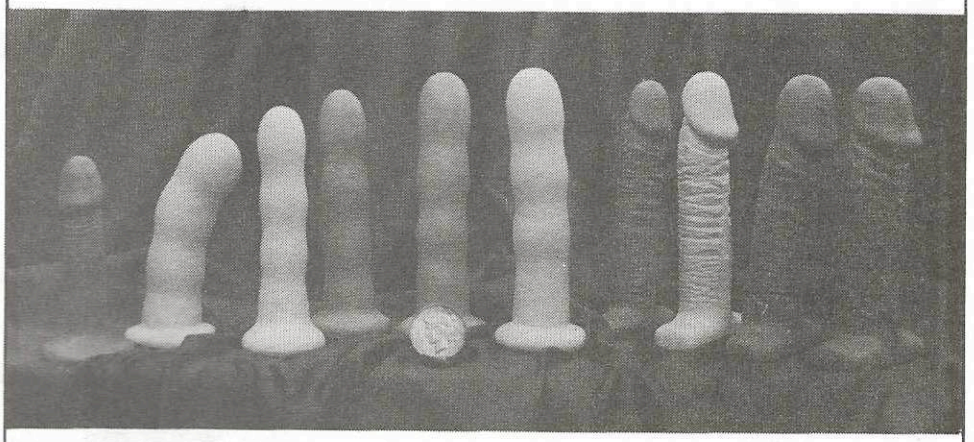

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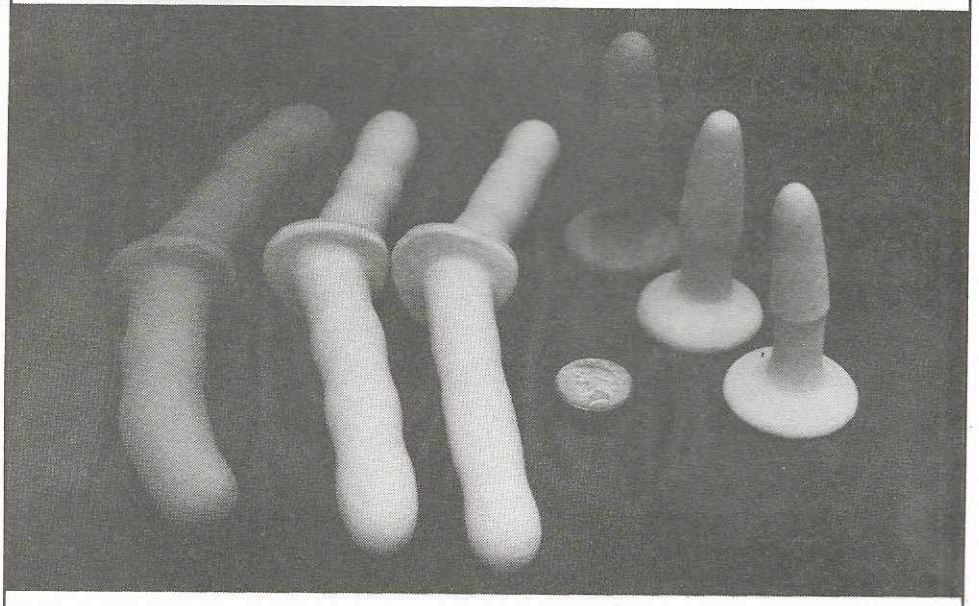

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PASSION IS A FOREST FIRE BETWEEN US

GISELLE COMMONS

We spend the night in a hotel, refurbished relic of a more elegant era. I cut Christine's hair, taking care to avoid the cowlicks, then we climb into the bathtub and shower together. Living in her cabin we have taken only towel baths, using her enameled basin, heating water on the small wood stove. Now we luxuriate in the unlimited hot water, soaping each other repeatedly, caressing through the bubbles.

I shampoo her hair, knead the scalp with all my fingers, spread foam to the amber brush under her arms, the curly bush where her legs come together. Rinsing, I kneel in the spray and lick her clitoris, gently finger the sides of her cervix, that playful little friend. She begins to shake, then kneels before me promising more later.

Since she has known for a long time that I enjoy water stimulation, I suggest she join me as I masturbate. She agrees with obvious delight.

I have her sit at the back of the tub with legs stretched forward. Patiently I test and retest the water until satisfied with the temperature and delicate flow. I sit, facing away from her, toward the faucet, then lie back and slide my bottom under the water, knees bent, feet against the wall tiles. I ask her to move forward until my head rests in her lap, her thighs support my shoulders.

I rub her breasts with fondness then close my eyes and go down into my body until I reach that so-soft-liquid-touching that I first found when I was seven. I use one hand to cut off the flow periodically, tease myself, rest a while, then release the fall and let my tension build again. My leg muscles twitch and jump. I caress one breast, both breasts, relax, and tense again.

I dream the water is licking me, loving me, fondling my stomach and my ass. I sense Christine's nearness; appreciate her unobtrusive presence, hands gently resting on my shoulders. I breathe in the warm mist and begin to stroke my shaft, pulling back the covering from my bud. My hand begins to move faster, almost of its own volition. I remind myself that my body knows what she wants, how to move without my conscious thought. Relax, focus, breathe faster, let my inner self lead.

I squeeze one nipple, feel the tendons in my neck grow tighter, pulling my head back, my jaw down. Please let her not think me ugly. Let this be a joy we can share. The water licks my softness, laps around my torso, touches me with delicate, sharp spray fingers.

I expand into sensations, reach for that intense point just short of satiation, hold it, hold myself open as my body buckles, closing in around myself, raising me away from Christine's legs up toward my knees and then releasing me slowly, like an ocean's wash from side to side. I roll into a fetal position, curling between her legs. She murmurs loving words to me: how pretty I am, how much she cares.

We climb out of the enclosure and towel each other dry. The bedroom seems toasty with the heat turned high. I stretch out on the bed and she rubs my back, sensuously and slowly as that first time. When I turn over she positions her vulva above my face and begins to lick my labia, darting her tongue into my vagina, causing internal sparks to shoot around my body, along my limbs. I separate her folds and press my lips against her cleft, move my head from side to side. I search out the faint smell of her, draw down the soft liquid, say a prayer of thanks for this blessing, this sacrament.

She must have a finger inside me from the way I feel all full inside; feel that more generalized pleasure that penetration brings, added to the exquisite blaze pulsing from my clitoris. What I am doing to her merges with what she is doing to me, blends with out humming sounds, the feeling of enclosed, protected space. I feel weightless, surrounded by warm loving, peak and relax with a sustained sense of excitement.

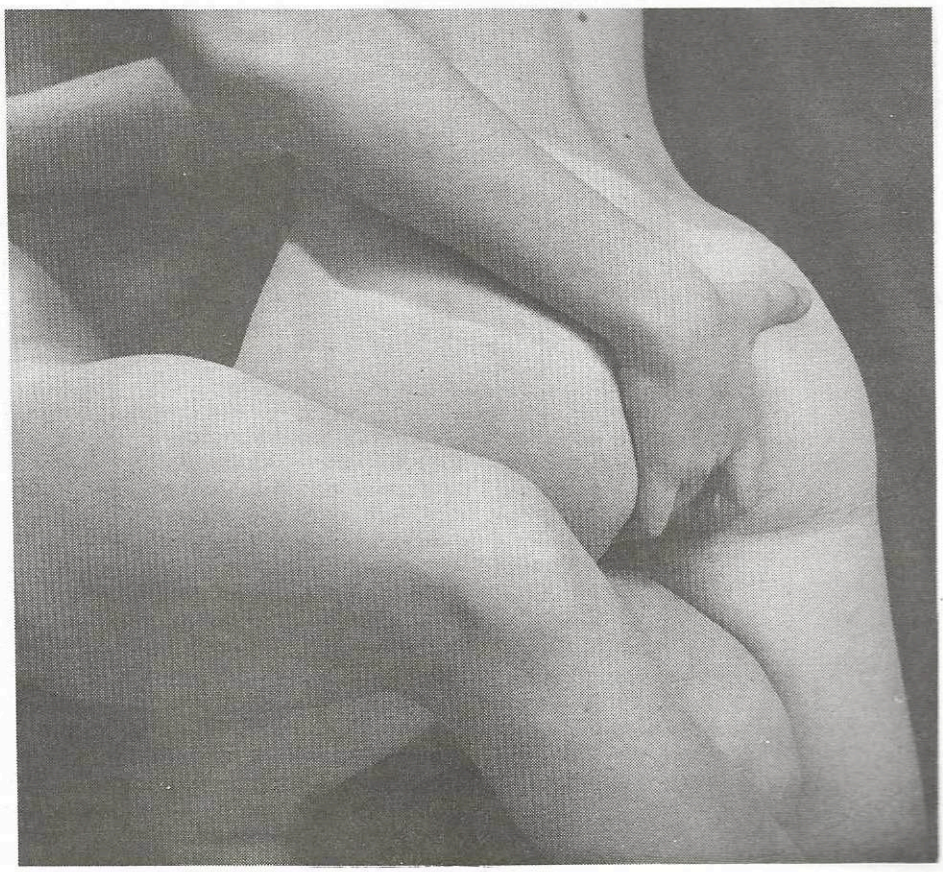
I start to buck and come first, holding onto her bottom and resting my lips against her, then licking, touching, we roll to the side. I continue tonguing her until she comes like the blasting out of small explosions, barely contained inside her skin. My arms pull her thighs against my face, blurring her sounds.

She curves her body around mine. "Did you deliberately hold off coming, trying to climax at the same time I did?" she asks.

"No, I wouldn't do that to my body. When an orgasm rises I just let it come."

Christine seems pleased by my answer, holds me for awhile then opens her journal. ◄

Excerpt from: *Passion is a Forest Fire Between Us*, a novel in search of a publisher.



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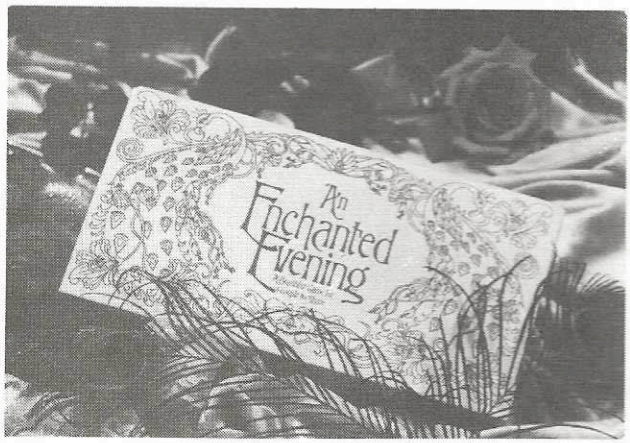

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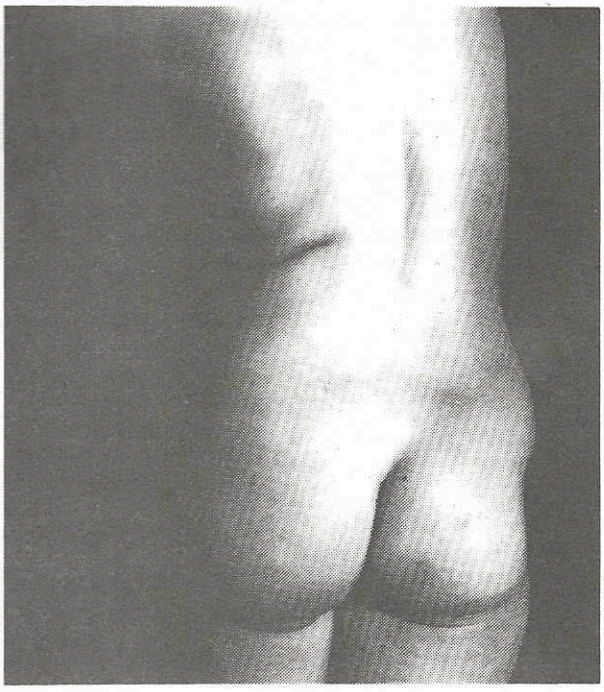


©Clare Wren

TAKE CARE OF YOUR SENSUOUS SELF

BAD BLOOD

In a news item from Garden Grove, Calif., entitled "Orange County Nixes Lesbian Blood Drive," it is revealed that the American Red Cross cancelled a lesbian-sponsored blood drive. AIDS hysteria is credited with the cancellation. Although there is a shortage of blood in the County, the Red Cross said that the public would be afraid that the blood collected in the drive was infected with AIDS. The Lesbian Sisters Blood Drive was created to collect blood from women on behalf of gay male friends who could not donate it. Of course, no lesbian AIDS cases have been reported. But, hey, gay is gay in the eyes of the "public," right?

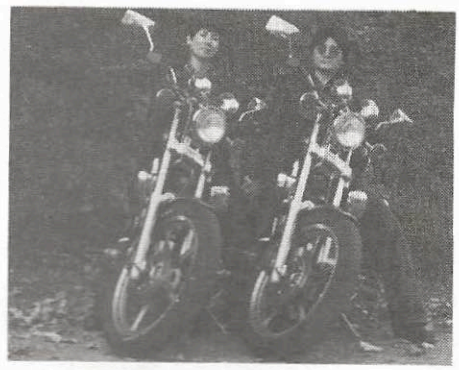
I CAN'T GET NO GRATIFICATION

In another instance of blind justice, two lesbians were charged for "acts of sexual gratification in public" in Madison, Wisconsin. A married heterosexual couple picked up for the same violation was not charged. The lesbians were cited for an offense defined in a recent Madison statute. Madison Assistant District Attorney Steve Bablitch says that the heterosexuals were set free because they "didn't believe anyone was around." The lesbians were less well-concealed. Both amorous interludes occurred during daylight hours.

ON THE ROAD

What two pinball partners became lovers and shortly thereafter revolutionized gay life by becoming the first live, kicking, and touring lesbian cabaret act to conquer North America? Why, you must be dead if you haven't heard of Lea Delaria and Jeanine Stroebel, a unique, some say out of this world, musical jazz and gay comedy duo. Together they embarked on a tour of lesbian and gay clubs across the country. "It came as a surprise to me," says Lea, "but the main live entertainment in lesbian bars is male drag shows and male strippers. We were the first lesbian entertainment most of our audiences had ever seen." Stroebel and Delaria are such experts on their subject that they even have a list of what constitutes "Pre-Pubescent Lesbian Behavior Signals": Number One, watch for the young girls who insist on licking out the cream between Oreo cookies before they eat the outsides."

What about Lea and Jeanine's own intimate sexual behavior? "Oh, yes, we're definitely into S/M," claims Lea. "Jeanine pretends to be a Gas and Electric repairman and I'm a Palo Alto suburban housewife." What? Can this intimidating entertainer, once billed as Raging BullDyke, actually be a femme? "Well, you know how it is, honey," Miss Lea replies. "The bigger and badder they are, the quicker they throw their legs in the air." Stroebel and Delaria will be touring the East Coast this summer–don't miss a delightful evening in their company.



WOMEN'S MOTORCYCLE FEST

Still riding high on the success of the first Women's Motorcycle Festival, organizers Sue Slate and Gin Shear are planning WMF 85. Once again the festival will be held at Camp Whitman, a private camp along Seneca Lake in Upstate New York, from August 23-26.

"We didn't quite know what we were getting into the first time around," explains Sue. "We tried to use what we had learned from attending other women's festivals to produce an experience centered around women, bikes, and riding that would be fun, valuable, and maybe even inspiring."

WMF 84 participants are demonstrating their enthusiasm for the event by offering services and donations for the next biking convention. Women are volunteering to provide computer services for mailing lists, graphic arts for publicity, sound engineering for evening entertainment during the event, instruction for bike mechanics workshops, and leadership for group rides. A certified riding instructor has volunteered to run a safe riding course.

Donations from last year's participants have helped erase half of the debt Sue and Gin incurred staging WMF 84. Sue and Gin financed WMF 84 themselves. The generosity of the participants "says a lot for women who took the risk and came to a first time event," say the backers. "We have heard from almost everyone who attended last year. They're coming back and bringing more bikers with them. We're not glad we lost money, but the returns in friendship and fun were more than worth the financial losses."

Gin and Sue are optimistically predicting that they will break even on WMF 85.

Staging the biking event was a learning experience, say the organizers. "Everything had a home-made touch to it," say Gin. That's not surprising considering the idea for WMF 84 was hatched in their kitchen and garage. "We really groaned after our first mailing went out and one of our staff members indicated we had created a new spelling for the word helmet."

The site for the biking fest, Camp Whitman, is situated in the heart of the Finger Lakes Region, an area rich in women's history. (Remember Seneca Falls?) Facilities include a pool, pond, showers, and sports facilities.

The festival is only open to the first 100 paid registrants, and early registration closes May 31. Final registration ends July 31. For information call 716-768-6054 or write WMF 85, 7 Lent Avenue, LeRoy, New York 14482.

IT'S A FRIENDLY EXPERIENCE

November 30, 1984. Chicago. It's cold and getting colder. Reagan was just reelected. In such a grim time, think the owners of Chicago's His n'Hers pub, how can we spread some Christmas cheer? Even more important, how can we lure women away from their warm homes and VCRs to buy a few brews at the His n'Hers? A civic-minded event? Nah, too boring. An orgy? Nah, too dangerous. Then inspiration hits: His n'Hers stages a charity event, respectably dubbed "The First Annual Women's Charity Services Master/Slave Auction as a Benefit for the Chicago Knights Toys for Tots Christmas Charity Drive." Note how Master/Slave kind of gets lost between Women's Charity and Toys for Tots. Ingenious.

Women flock to His n'Hers. They are welcomed by the pub's logo: "It's a friendly experience." Inside a woman auctions off "13 sleazy women" to a "standing room only crowd of appreciative women," according to a His n'Hers press release. The women offer services such as professional massage to the highest bidder. The release says that the "freebies" one masseuse gave that night "seemed to excite more than soothe."

Stimulated by this kind of atmosphere, and by offers of evenings of dinner, dancing, and "whatever else evolved (at the bidder's expense of course)" going up on the block, the customers were generous. They offered $400 in bids and donations to Toys for Tots. The donations for the kiddie playthings were taken up by a woman who "doffed her blouse" to elicit the spirit of giving. Thanks to His n'Hers for a fine and generous evening. ◄

JAN STAFFORD

J.A. Cherry

NOTICE FROM NEW ENGLAND WOMEN'S MUSIC RETREAT

PRO-HEALING POLICY: Because a number of women have experienced psychic damage and have expressed concern about S/M, NEWMR has established the following policies: 1. There will be no sale of S/M paraphernalia. 2. There will be no public displays of S/M techniques. 3. No pro S/M workshops have been accepted for publication in the workshop listing and requests for S/M workshops dealing with practice rather than theory will not be accepted on site.

THE FESTIVAL SEX DEBATES

SHARON PAGE

Women's music and cultural festivals, spanning the last decade and nearly every region of North America, are arguably the only institutions of lesbian-feminism on a large national, even international, scale. Though a small minority of lesbian, bisexual or straight-feminist women have ever attended one, by their unique and intense character, these annual all-female gatherings boast a far-flung impact on the meaning and shape of the women's liberation movement.

Legend has it that in the early years an "anything goes" mood prevailed, which over time was curtailed to more structured, politically-correct standards. Inevitably, skirmishes around differing sexual styles and politics flared up, in recent years challenging status quos on all sides. Long-simmering discord around S/M and sex materials boiled over this past summer with "official policy statements" demanded by sex conservatives to force sex radicals back underground.

At stake is more than meets the eye. Superficially the issue is norms of sexual respectability and deviancy: this time set not by the laws and taboos of patriarchal society, but by the political rhetoric and personal biases of the guardians of radical-feminist purity. But more fundamentally, the issue is our movement's stand on women's right to information and choice in all areas of life. The Sex Debates ask bluntly whether the women's movement includes the diverse experiences and choices of all pro-feminist women–or whether it is a new exclusive sorority that demands conformity as the price of first-class membership.

This question pervades every issue from personal idiosyncrasy to political priority. Because sexuality is feminism's most loaded paradigm, differences around S/M, pornography, bisexuality and the like increasingly have stood in for other disputes. Sex has come to be both savior and demon; core issue and metaphor, for the present and future of feminism.

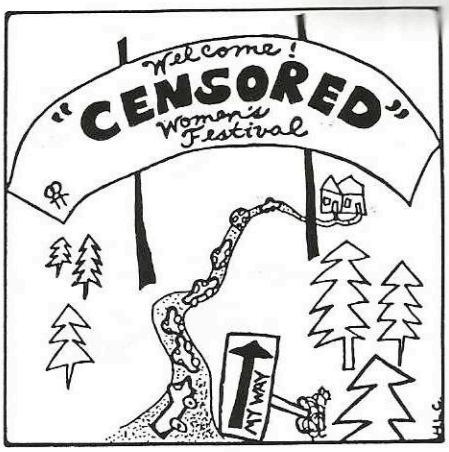
As cauldrons of contention in the Sex Debates, recent festival developments reveal that, in spite of some reverses, sex radicals–and a renewed commitment to pluralistic choice–may be gaining surprising new ground.

S/M dykes have led persistent struggles over the years for the right to personal presentation and meetings free from harassment. Their efforts have met with a mixed hash of accommodation and opposition, but the extent of tolerated space is basically staked out anew each year at each event. Bisexual women coming out of the closet in recent years have also kicked up controversy. Women's sex magazines (and by extension, merchants of sex materials) burst forth in '84 as the latest and logical next step in the contest.

The Ninth Michigan Womyn's Music Festival erupted in ugly confrontations when two Chicago feminists attempted to organize for a planned "woman-identified pornography" publication. Wild rumors abounded, volatile meetings took place round-the-clock, angry protestors marched and chanted, and the would-be publishers were stopped from organizing. (Ironically, a book merchant quietly sold 100 copies of the debut issue of *On Our Backs* without disruption.)

Fueling the series of outcries was an ill-placed S/M workshop that demonstrated techniques, as well as a main-stage rock-'n'roll act outfitted in leather fashions. (Meanwhile, crafts-area merchants offered piercing, sex toys and leather gear without incident.) The alarm reached fever-pitch with demands that festival producers draft a "code of feminist ethics and morality" to regulate sexual expression.

Planners of the fourth New England Women's Musical Retreat, held a few weeks later, took their stand with a "pro-healing policy," a euphemism for a total ban on S/M public display, workshops or sale of gear. An "unfacilitated pro-S/M discussion" printed in the festival workshop list was blacked-out. Motivated by reference to women "experiencing psychic damage," the policy called for upsetting incidents to be reported to those "wearing badges."



S/M supporters who met with planners were told only that the policy would be reviewed. Two planners contacted by this writer said that the pro-S/M anthology *Coming to Power* is still on the agenda for discussion. Restrictions on publications sold at the festival so far remain an open question.

Though the views of sex conservatives have been given official status at this event by its planners, this may prove to be the exception rather than the impending rule. Organizers of the other major festivals seem more attuned to the complexities of women's rights to uncensored information and personal decision-making.

The producer of the West Coast and co-producer of the Southern Women's Music and Comedy Festivals, Robin Tyler, is hesitant to set down written policy, preferring an on-going educational dialogue. Taking to task both "puritanical feminists oppressing people for their own good" and sex radicals indiscriminately flaunting their signals, Tyler appeals to all sides for restraint, taste, and concern for the whole.

Michigan Festival producers Barbara Price and Lisa Vogel tackled the issues with a policy statement released in November. It validates the divergent needs of women, including both those "who are threatened or frightened by consideration of sexual taboos" and those "who want to thoroughly explore their fears and fantasies with other women." The guidelines attempt a fine balance of "preserving the open forum" while

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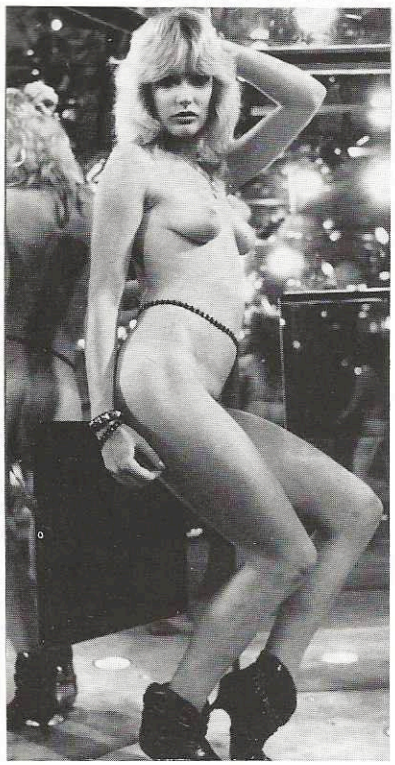
Sex Point *is a regular feature which explores contemporary issues of sexuality.* On Our Backs *welcomes your views.*

Continued on page 37

COME PLAY



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Vaginal Infections

Welcome to our new column on sex and health. Our columnist, Suzann Gage, has been active in the feminist health movement since 1971. During her 11 years as a director at the Feminist Women's Health Center in Los Angeles, she worked extensively on lesbian health and sexuality issues. She is co-author of the books A New View of a Womens Body, *and* How to Stay Out of the Gynecologist's Office, *as well as illustrating* Woman Centered Pregnancy and Birth. *She currently provides holistic health care for women and sexuality/relationship workshops for lesbians in L.A.*

Is it true that lesbians can pass vaginal infections between each other? A client, Judy B., came to see me with this question. Judy and her lover do not have sex with any other women. But occasionally Judy would develop bacterial infections, especially after a lot of "rough sex". By that she means when there is a lot of friction when her lover puts her fingers in Judy's vagina. Although sometimes Judy would do the same to her, her partner never got vaginal infections; has never had one, in fact. Judy reported that she had a lot of vaginal infections years ago when she was on the birth control pill and sleeping with men. "But I thought I didn't have anything to worry about now, being with a woman," Judy said. She also believed her lover and she had clean habits and were careful to wash their hands before having sex. Why did she still have this painful, consistent problem?

Lesbians can and sometimes do pass vaginal infections between each other and even venereal diseases (this will be discussed in a future column). However, the likelihood of this varies greatly, depending on the kind of sexual activity, whether or not the people with whom you are having sex have an infection they could pass on to you, personal hygiene, diet, stress, and your general state of health.

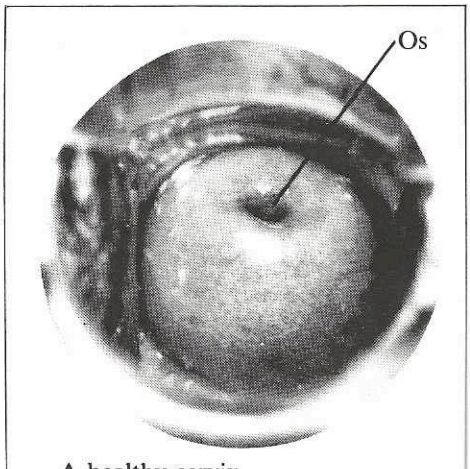
Vaginal infections can occur when yeast, bacteria, or other organisms such as trichomonads overgrow in the vagina. By doing vaginal self-examination with a plastic speculum, a woman can see her cervix (the donut-shaped neck and entrance to the uterus in the back of the vagina), and vaginal secretions, and learns to distinguish between healthy vaginal secretions and odors, and discharges and odors that may indicate a vaginal infection.

Bacteria vaginal infections (also called nonspecific vaginitis—a term some physicians fall back on when they aren't sure what kind of infection a woman has) can create a puslike, grayish, even yellowish discharge with a strong odor and sometimes itching. Trichomonas, a single cell organism, tends to create a yellowish/greenish discharge with a strong fishy odor and a lot of itching. A yeast fungus overgrowth, also called monillia, can be clumpy and white (like cottage cheese), itchy, and have a yeasty or bread-like odor.

All of these conditions can be passed from one woman to another through sexual activities that involve direct contact of warm, moist mucous membrane linings and the resulting mixing of body secretions, such as with the mouth, vagina, and anus. These organisms die quickly once they hit the cold, dry air. This is why most people do not get these infections from toilet seats. . . unless they sit directly on infected secretions that are still warm and wet!

Understanding all this enables us to make common-sense decisions about our sexual practices. For example, if one woman (who we'll call Ann) has a trichomonas vaginal infection and her partner, Maria, puts her fingers into Ann's vagina, Maria can prevent herself from getting trichomonas by simply not immediately reinserting her fingers into her own vagina until after he has washed them. Or, if Maria has oral sex with Ann, then French kisses her, Ann may want to avoid immediately having oral sex with Maria, as this might pass trichomonas from her mouth to Maria's genitals.

All women have a variety of bacteria commonly found in the vagina that under most conditions will not usually develop into a full-fledged infection. Hemophillus or Gardnerella (now believed by some experts to be the same bacteria) is considered a common cause of bacteria vaginal infections.



A healthy cervix

However, these bacteria are considered to be essential to maintain a healthy ecology or environment in the vagina, and may actually prevent some types of vaginal conditions. Yeast, a fungus normally found in the vagina, appears to overgrow when women take antibiotics, which kill off healthful vaginal bacteria that seem to keep yeast growth controlled.

When bacteria does overgrow and create an infection, there can be many causes. One cause is the insertion of unclean fingers or objects into the vagina. Inserting something from the anus, for example, directly into the vagina is notorious for causing a Cocci bacterial vaginal infection. It is essential to thoroughly wash, and, if possible, disinfect anything before reinsertion from the anus into the vagina. Some lesbians who use dildos cover them first with a condom as a precaution to prevent infection, and use a fresh condom on the dildo (or other toy) before use by or on another woman.

Birth control pills can make a woman far more susceptible to vaginal infections, because the pill interferes with the natural flora of the vagina. For some women, this can continue to be a problem long after they stop taking the pill. Past severe vaginal infections or gonorrhea can result in a lessening of the vagina's ability to ward off future infections. Additionally, the cumulative effects of years of consuming sugar, salt, white flour, coffee, black tea, cigarettes, alcohol, and other chemical substances, not to mention too much stress and lack of exercise, are major contributors to hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) and general ill health, which greatly suppresses the immune system, thus making one more susceptible to infection. Therefore, in spite of good hygiene, a lot of friction on the vaginal wall in a case like this may be all that is needed to trigger another vaginal infection.

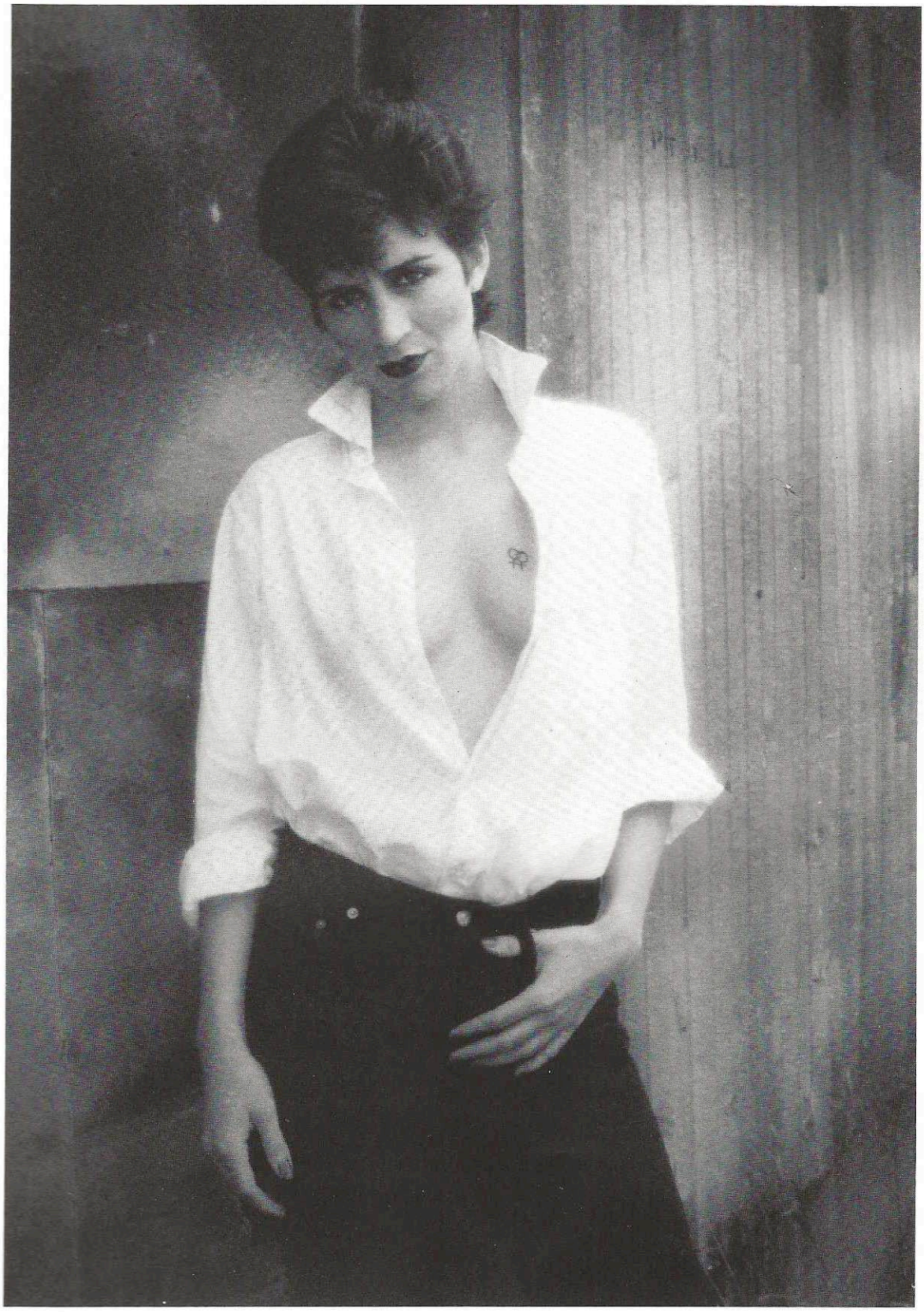
There are many non-prescription home

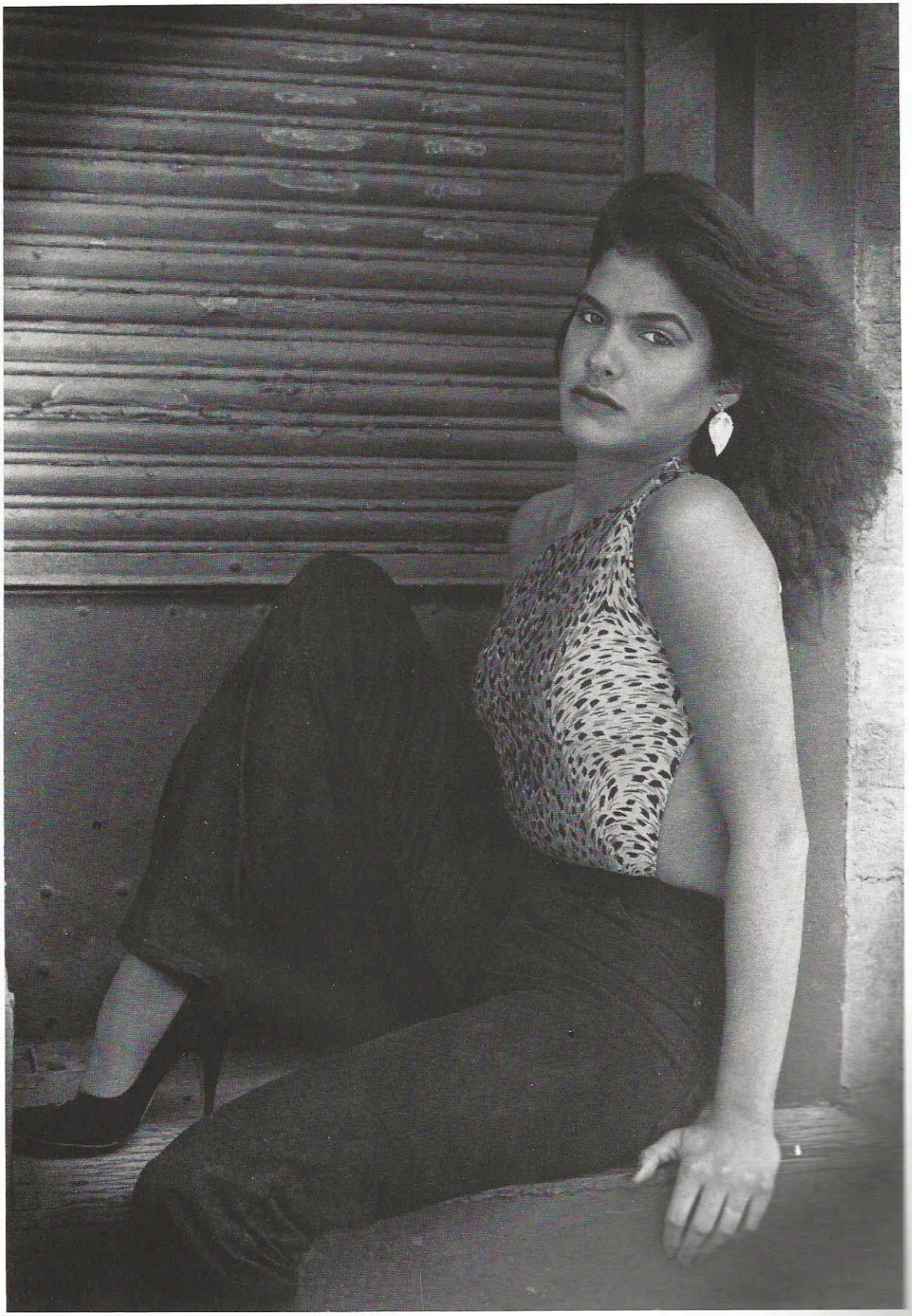
Continued on page 41

JUST LIKE LINDA STALTER

An aspiring model calls up *On Our Backs* to see about posing for the magazine. When asked what type of photos she'd like to have taken, out comes the answer: "I'd like to look like one of those Linda Stalter greeting cards." Chic. Classy. Slightly dangerous. Linda Stalter's photography, expressed through a bestselling greeting card line she issued over five years ago, redefined what the thoroughly modern lesbian looks like.

Today, Linda specializes in portrait work, from her home base in San Francisco. Originally from a Pennsylvania milltown, the 37-year-old photographer/painter is the only artist in the family; the only crazy one. And crazy is exactly how her pictures make us feel...





BIZARRO IN LOVE

JAN STAFFORD

Excerpts From a Soon-to-be-Published Novel

Who is *Bizarro in Love*, and why is she going to change lesbian sex history forever? *Bizarro* is the leading lady of the most outrageous, explicit, sexy, lesbian novel ever unleashed on a pair of sweaty palms. *Bizarro in Love* is *On Our Backs'* debut in book publishing; our first in what we plan to be a scintillating series of the choicest lesbian erotica written today. *Bizarro in Love* has been variously described as everything from "fear and loathing in lesbian-sex-land," to the "steamiest novel I've ever read." Look for *Bizarro in Love* in your local bookshop this year.

INTRODUCTION

She fell in love. She fell in love with a married woman. She fell hard. She knew it was wrong for her, but she couldn't help it. They met in secret. They met passionately.

It was as though she were leading two lives. In one, she was Bebe Ziarro, a former world-class hurdler and top sports writer for the *Bay Sun*. She was tall, athletically slim, golden haired, and, depending on her mood, her eyes were either bluer than the Bay or greyer than the fog that blanketed San Francisco. Even if she weren't famous, heads would have turned as she passed by.

In the other life, she was in love. She was obsessed with her beloved. Her beloved was a petite, dark, blue-collar worker. She was a "facilities maintenance troubleshooter" who answered emergency calls when systems in financial district highrises were haywire. Bebe first saw her when she was repairing the *Bay Sun*'s heating system. Bebe had been drawn to her and followed her to the building's machine room, shivering with cold. They'd warmed themselves together on the floor between the machines, their voices muffled by the sound of the motors.

She knew it was wrong for her, but she couldn't help herself. She launched herself into a series of ribald distractions. She recounted her exploits to her beloved, who had admitted a penchant for erotica.

"There's no good, romantic porn available," her beloved said to her during one of their hurried, clandestine meetings. "I can only read that one lesbian scene in *Delta of Venus* so many times."

"I'll write some for you," Bebe said.

Her beloved laughed. "You are a bizarre and beautiful woman," she said.

"I am a woman in love."

Bebe returned to her office and looked up bizarre. Webster's said: "bi·zarre: strikingly out of the ordinary: as a.: odd, extravagant, or eccentric in style of mode: b.: involving sensational contrasts or incongruities. SYN see Fantastic."

She decided the definition fit her. She had always been extraordinary: as the blond, tall daughter of Spanish parents, as an athlete who was "out of the closet," and now as a woman in love.

She decided to write for her beloved. She would take the spanish word for bizarre, bizarro, and would call herself Bizarro In Love.

Thus began her correspondence.

FROM CHAPTER 4

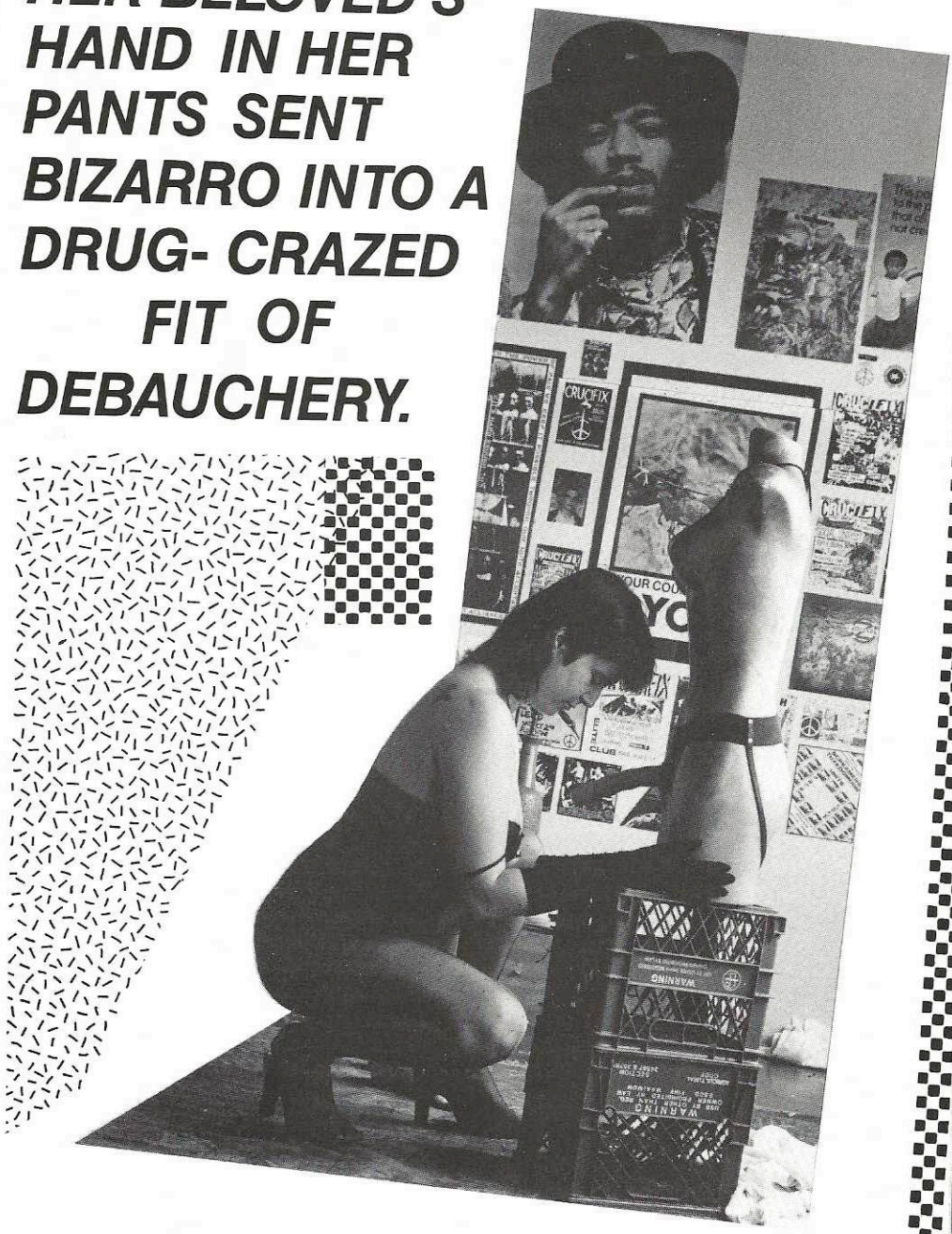
The thought of her beloved's hand in her pants sent Bizarro into a drug-crazed fit of debauching. She copped two grams of coke at Mission and Sixth and snorted it in the bathroom of the Greyhound Bus Terminal. The rush hit her like a brick orgasm.

As she exited the terminal, even the winos looked like archangels. It wasn't hard for Bizarro to pick up the first available dyke cruising in front of the Civic Center Hotel.

"I'm just doing this," Bizarro mumbled as they climbed the hotel's rickety steps, "because my beloved is not available."

"Flattery will get you everywhere," said the dyke as she opened the door of room 222.

THE THOUGHT OF HER BELOVED'S HAND IN HER PANTS SENT BIZARRO INTO A DRUG- CRAZED FIT OF DEBAUCHERY.



In the dim light of the hotel room, Bizarro checked out her pickup and decided that fate had not done her dirty at all. She was tall and thin, with a fine nose and heavy-lidded brown eyes. Her name was Barbara, which took Bizarro back in time to a candlelit room in Germany. There are 62 candles in the room, one for each bottle of wine she and her lover, Barbara, had drunk that summer. Barbara sits on the floor among the candles rolling a "cone" from grass, tobacco, and Lebanese hash. Bizarro moves around the room taking her picture through a soft-focus lens.

Barbara is wearing cutoffs and nothing else. She is tan. Her brown hair hangs in her face while she looks down at her work on the cone. She looks up and Bizarro blushes.

"Come here. I want to touch you," Barbara commands. Bizarro kneels by her side. Barbara's fingers trace the inside of her thigh. "You're 19," she says as she traces the seam of Bizarro's shorts, following along the path blazed by Bizarro's slit, stopping and clasping her fingers tightly at the peak. "I find that very exciting."

"I'm glad I excite you, for any reason," Bizarro whispers. Barbara's reply is spoken in nibbles on Bizarro's belly.

Elton John is singing something silly from a box across the room. Barbara laughs into Bizarro's thighs and follows the echo of her laugh into her folds, around the peaks, deep.

Bizarro floated off into a world of sensation and Barbara's voice speaking inside her, whispering lies bigger than life and truths smaller than her hands. "You look beautiful by candlelight," Bizarro said in her reverie, and the dyke in the Civic Center Hotel said: "I know the lights are dim, but they're not candles. Doesn't matter, 'cause I don't read much." Barbara, the dyke in the Civic Center Hotel, put a freebase pipe to her lips, lit a match, inhaled deeply. She put the pipe down, walked over to Bizarro, sealed her lips to hers, and exhaled slowly.

Bizarro fell back with the rush. "Aah," Barbara sighed. She lay back beside Bizarro. "Oh yes," she said, her fingers finding the seam of Bizarro's jeans. Her fingers followed the path of the cocaine rush.

She kissed Bizarro and they rolled on the bed kissing, pulling off each other's clothes like sleepwalkers in love. They kissed and softly bit each other's lips. Barbara's lips traced a path down Bizarro's body as she knelt beside her. Her tongue grazed through her soft hair and around her swollen clit. It circled it like stock car on a track. Her tongue took the curves fast and pressed hard on the straightaway. She flicked lightly, quickly over it. She turned and offered herself to Bizarro. They buried their faces in moist pussy and moaned in delight.

The numbing effect of the drug made them comfortable in any position. They remained locked in a licking embrace for hours. Finally they fell back gasping. Bizarro nodded out. When she awakened, she saw her partner kneeling in front of her wearing a dildo that seemed to have no end.

"You ain't seen nothin' yet," said the dyke. She pressed a button and the big thing vibrated and swirled in a circular motion.

"Wait a minute," Bizarro said. The woman pressed her hand against Bizarro's chest. Bizarro protested weakly. With her other hand, the woman guided the massive dildo into Bizarro. Bizarro gasped. Barbara thrust and Bizarro screamed. Barbara thrust again, pulled back and thrust harder. It started to feel good and Bizarro swung her hips in rhythm with Barbara's thrusts. She lost herself in opening and closing. Her head floated and her body moved.

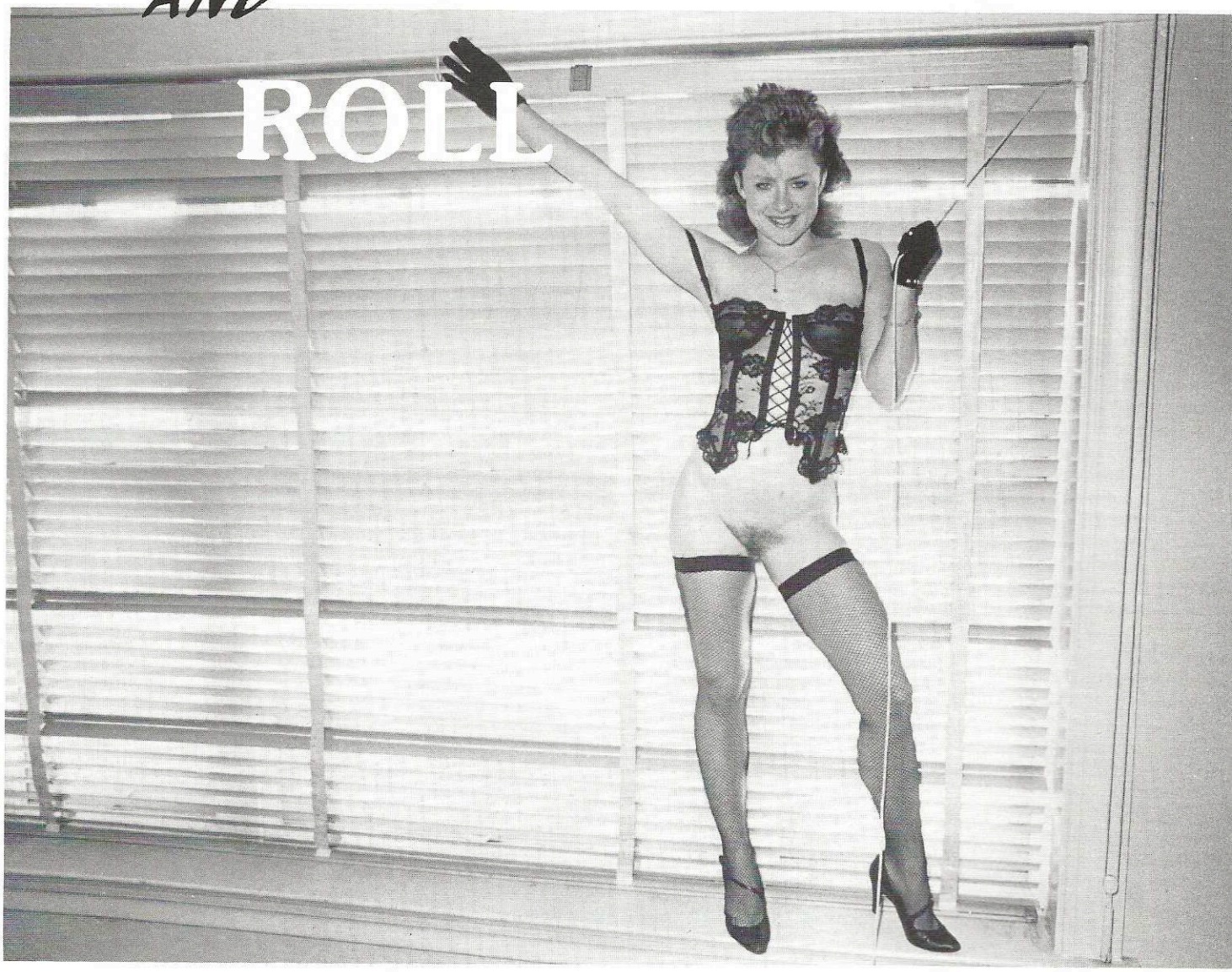
Bizarro lost her sense of time. Barbara fucked her until sweat dripped from her face and chest. Then she slipped down and gently licked Bizarro's clit until Bizarro drifted into unconsciousness.

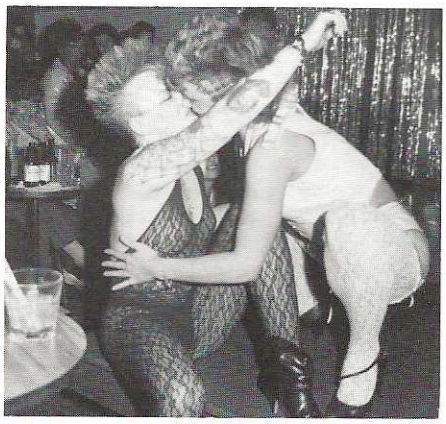
When she awoke, Bizarro was alone. Barbara was gone. The bare bulb lit the room. The dildo and harness hung on the doorknob of the hotel room. Bizarro got up, put on her clothes, put the dildo in her bag, and left.

She took the steps two at a time going down. ◀

ROCK AND ROLL RAMONA

Photos by Dale Baron





FANNY FATALE INTERVIEWS RAMONA

Fanny Fatale cornered Ramona after one of her performances at Baybrick's Burlesque for Women dance show. She had plenty to tell. Hot, sweaty and excited after her dance, she flew backstage and. . .

Tough, Uninhibited Petite, Energetic,

Rock 'n' Roll Ramona bares it as our centerfold star— burning bright and white hot.

Ramona: I love dancing! I crave the attention and those girls' eyes all over me! When I don't dance for awhile, I get hungry for it. I need it! Give it to me! I'm in love with dancing!

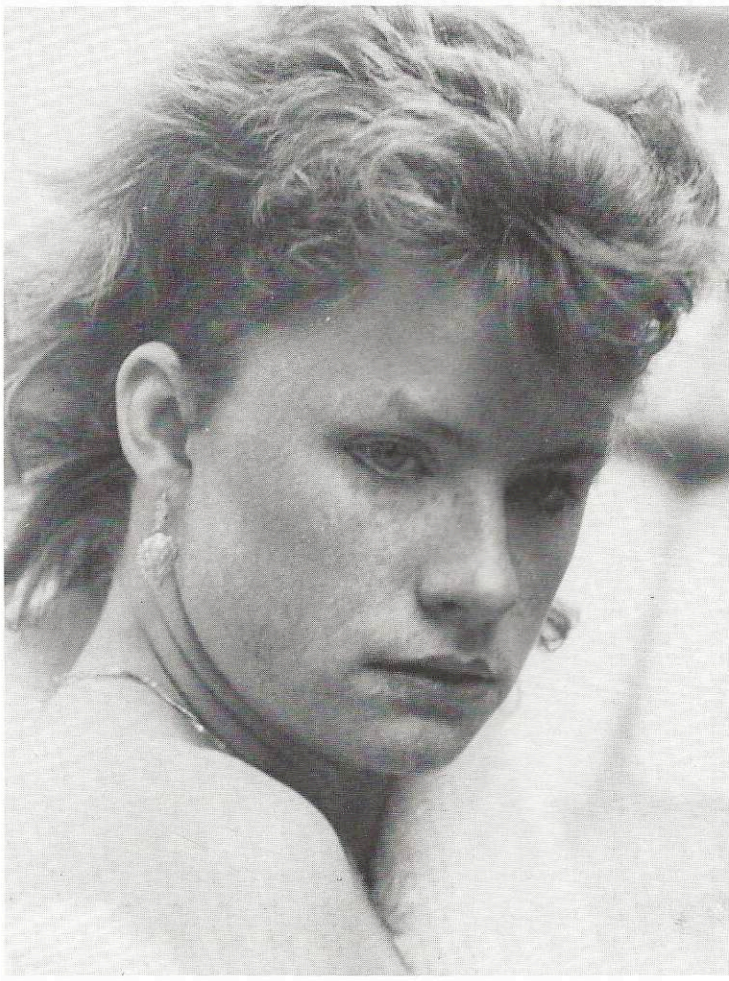
Fanny (noting the uproaring applause): They adore your sexy ways!

Ramona: Yeah, and I don't need to get married to get appreciation. I feel love and affection when I get fucked, too. How come I always get involved with these girls who don't want to fuck me? Three or four girls like me, but they are so shy!

It's *so* frustrating. I called up Danielle last night and said, "Help! Let's go out, I'm horny." But she had this little French thing lined up, this tasty French croissant. I was stalking this girl at all the clubs. Couldn't find her. If I did, I'd have thrown her down and said, "It's now or never, bitch, or I'm leaving tonight for Brazil or somewhere where there's a group of dykes who have *learned* something."

This girl came up to me last week and said, "How do you get any dates showing your tits like that? I could never do it." I was so blown away. I wanted to say, "Well, what's wrong with your tits?" Nobody ever comes up and lays that shit on me. She's probably jealous. She'd love to do it herself, I'm sure, if she weren't so fucking upright. Like, if you can't stand the heat, bitch, get out of the sun!

You know that woman who gave me a twenty on stage? She gave me her phone number, too, and wants to take me out in her *limousine* and any restaurant I want. Just name it. Now there's a woman who appreciates strippers. Guess that answers any questions. Most women react to my dance by falling all over me. It's great!



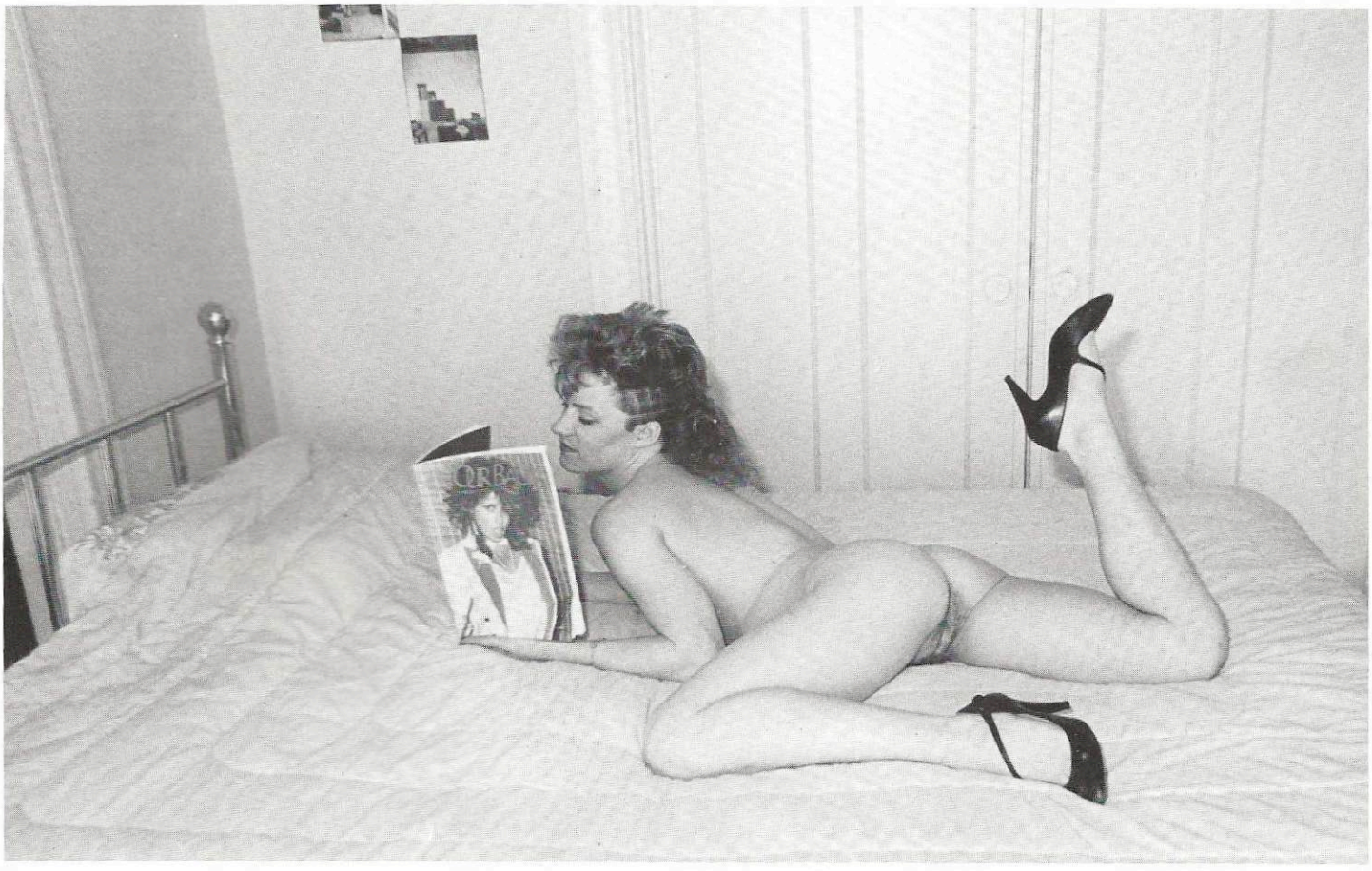
Fanny: Do you ever take any of them home?

Ramona: I took that big, touch butch Terry home the other night. It was pretty good, but I told her, "Look, babe, if you want to keep fucking me you *got* to get a dildo. Big, old, gorgeous butch like that, I couldn't believe it when she said she never fucked with a dildo. Well, get with it! She said no one had ever talked to her so frankly before. It doesn't bother me, talking about sex; what people like and don't like. A woman doesn't have to know everything when she's with me. Just be open and willing to try it, at least once.

Fanny: You like butch women, then?

Ramona: Yeah. Also femme. I like more aggressive women.

Fanny: But you're aggressive. . .



Ramona: But I'm submissive sexually, but sometimes I can take a pretty little femme, lay her down, and (laughs) stick it to her. I love to act out fantasies of all types. I'm not into just plain old sex. Not into pain either, but the idea behind the pain—the dominance trip. Beautiful women, butch or femme, turn me on. I like a butch's attitude. Hormones have a lot to do with it. (Laughs)

Fanny: How do you know if someone is butch or femme?

Ramona: It's a natural thing, not an act; but something that has been there all along. I have always been feminine. Those qualities overpower my masculine ones. Any butch woman has a soft side to her, you just got to find it. I can make just about any butch woman lie down. No woman is completely masculine—at least you hope she isn't. Some days you don't know, though.

I get these beautiful feminine women after me, and they say, "Ramona, I don't know about you. You're not feminine and you're not masculine. You're like a mountain—that's why I want to climb you!" But really, I'm more feminine. Sometimes I come off kind of tough, but then I rip it away.

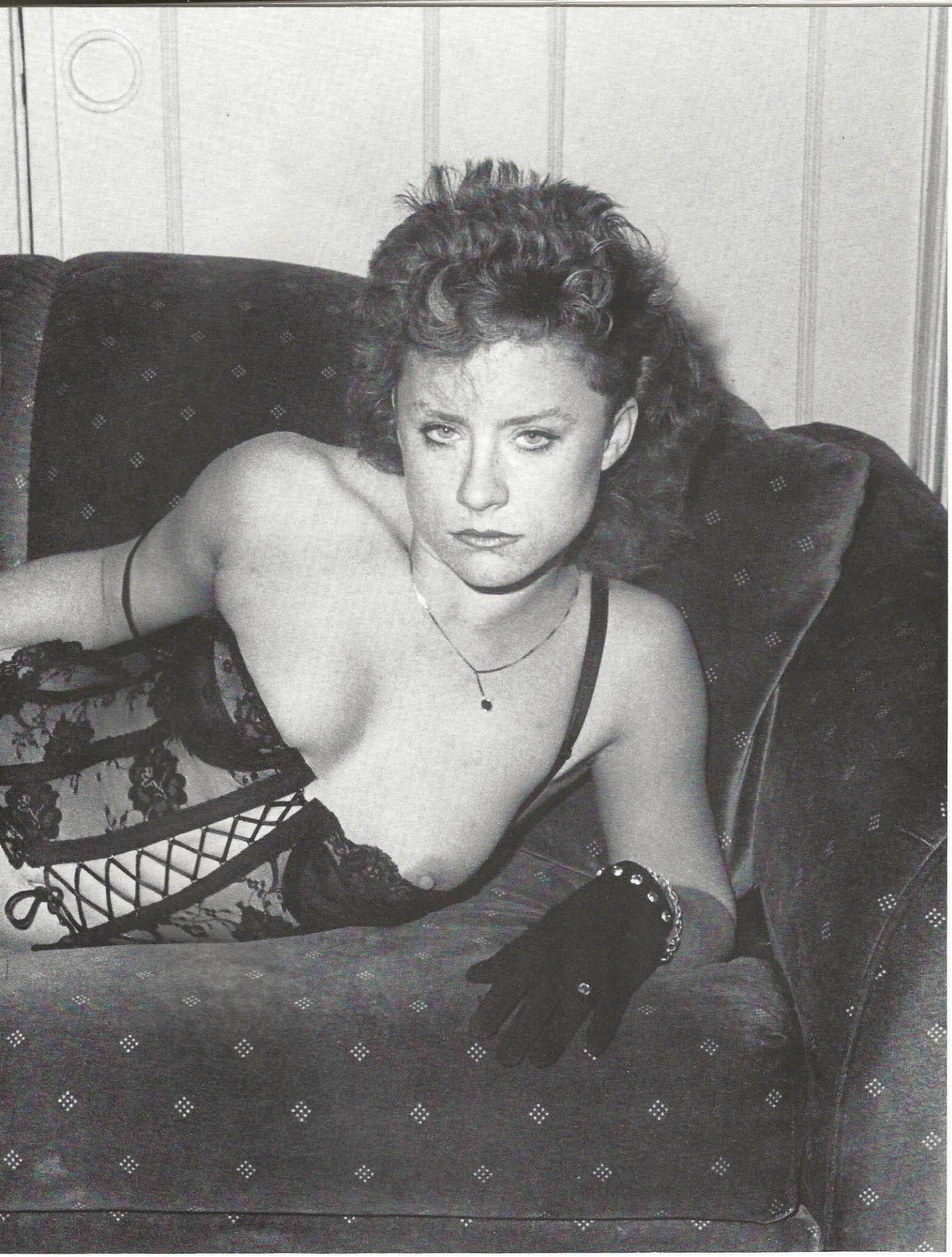
Speaking of ripping things, did I tell you the story of how I met my last lover? At Scott's, in the days when that bar was tough, before I was clean and sober. I was so loaded that night, sitting at the bar, and I looked up and our eyes met. I couldn't believe what I saw. Who *is* that, fuck! I gotta get my hands on *this*! I went over to her, ripped away my shirt like this (exposing her tit), and said, "I'm a stripper. How about it?"

She said, "So what are you going to do, dance for me? I ain't going to fuck you." She was cool. We finally made it to bed a few days later. It was okay, but things really started to cook after she read *Coming to Power*. We started to play with our fantasies, let them come out and surprise us. But most of our games weren't tie-up games. Stud and whore was nice. Now *she* knows how to use a dildo!

I had this great new experience at the health spa yesterday. You know those vibrating machines that are for cellulite? All of a sudden it started to feel real good, so I moved around, rubbed it against my clit and had an orgasm, mmm, right there. In public, with all these people around. I loved it!

Fanny: What's in store for tomorrow?

Ramona: I'm happy. I'm dancing, I got my bike and a nice apartment. I got a mixer and amp, and am singing all the time. I want to be in a rock and roll band. Rock 'n' Roll, sex, forget the drugs. It's great. ◄



THE TELEPHONE

by the
LADY OF THE LAKE

> Her voice was driving me crazy. My hand on my clitoris was also driving me crazy. I could not go on much longer. I would have to come or die. "Stop now," she said, and hung up.

I met Clare at a feminist political meeting. I got there late and had to stand against the wall to listen to the speeches. When it was her turn to speak, I was glad for the wall. Although she looked fairly ordinary, too thin for my taste; when she opened her mouth I knew it was going to change my life. Her voice was deep and dark, like a river with many hidden currents. And her vocabulary! Such rolling, intricate language moved me almost to tears. (I have always found women with strong vocabularies extremely erotic. I want to crawl inside the mouths of such women. I want to know how their elusive minds work.) Clare spoke for a long time, and my cunt got hotter and my breasts tingled. I wondered what she would think if she knew the effect she was having on me.

Later, I approached her, told her how much I had enjoyed the speech. Looking directly into her eyes, I spoke about how moved I was by her voice. She asked me for my phone number. I was getting more excited. Maybe this was a possibility. She moved very close to me, speaking so only I could hear.

"Look, maybe I'm wrong, but I think I know some things I could teach you. Things about the voice, about how it commands power, about the uses of the voice. But you may not have the courage it demands. If you want, I will call you."

I nodded yes, and then she moved away so quickly from me, and the rest of the evening I spent watching her move from woman to woman, and finally leave with a woman she seemed very married to. I went home, my head swirling with confusion and desire. I had never wanted anyone in the way I wanted this woman.

A few days later, the phone rang. Clare came directly to the point. "I want to be your telephone lover. If you agree, we will meet by telephone. I will talk to you, tell you erotic stories, make you perform erotic acts, instruct you. If you are lucky, and very well behaved, I may occasionally allow you to make love to me in public restrooms at political meetings. If you disagree with these terms, you can hang up now, and I will never speak to you again. If you want to know me better, if you want to be my lover, say yes, and then hang up."

"Yes," I said, trembling, and then hung up. My ear was burning my face red. She had given me no chance to ask her my own questions. What had I agreed to? I could not sleep for several nights and I wandered through my days sleepwalking, always listening for the ring of the phone. Every time it rang I leapt for it in anticipation, but it was never her.

Three months after this phone call, when I had given up any hope of hearing from her, she called me again.

"I want you to understand who is in power here. I can wait forever to talk to you. I do not need you, but you need me. My voice is necessary for your happiness. You are only an ear for me. Perhaps an ordinary ear, after all. There are so many ears. If you don't please me, I will go away at any time, break the connection. Do you understand?"

Yes, I understood. I, who had succeeded for many years in not becoming too entangled in relationship, but enjoyed sleeping with many different women, understood immediately. I had left many women in just this way, hanging up the phone on their lives, leaving them with the sound of only the empty wires buzzing in their ears.

"Undress and sit with you legs spread."

I thought momentarily of not complying, of only pretending to do what she told me, but the imperative tone in her voice was too strong for me. I clumsily pulled off my pants and underwear, then slipped my shirt over my head. I sat on the edge of the bed and spread my legs.

"Now run your hand around the rim of your nipple. Umm, do you like it? Do you want to keep touching yourself? Tell me how you feel."

What did she want from me? Wasn't it enough that I sat here naked and so open, for her alone? Must I acknowledge what I was doing, what I was agreeing to do, by saying the words?

"I feel cold and fearful and exposed. There is a sensation deep in my cunt, like a wave pulling back and in. My breasts want to be touched harder, I want you to keep talking, and my clitoris is very wet."

"Now slip your hand between your legs and touch your clitoris. You like that, don't you?" she crooned softly. "Oh yes, I do like it," I cried.

"You like to feel yourself aroused. Now rub your clitoris so gently, until you can hardly stand it. Let yourself know what it is like to be full of hunger."

Her voice was driving me crazy. My hand on my clitoris was also driving me crazy. I could not go on much longer. I would have to come or die.

"Stop now," she said, and hung up.

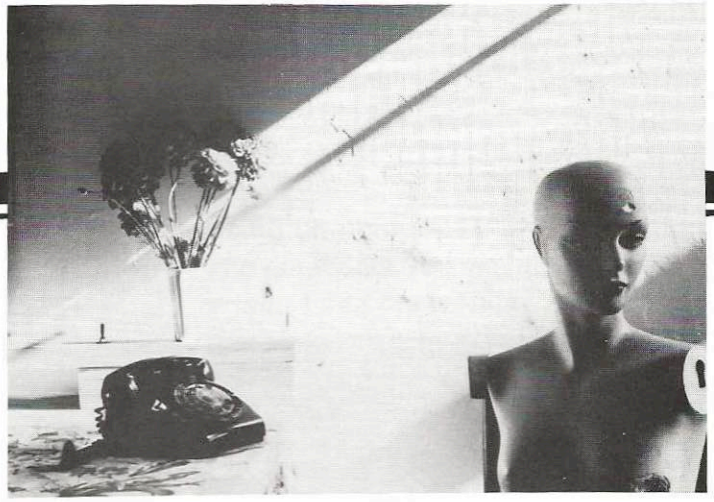
Her command seemed to hang in the air moments after the phone had gone dead. How could I stop? It could not be possible. So I pinched and squeezed my nipple with one hand and let my other hand wander in and out of my cunt, back to my clitoris, so full and ready to come, and finally, ah, there it was, and I could finally sigh and fall back on the bed. I lay on the bed for a long time, wondering why Clare had told me to stop. Surely she did not mean to leave me so full of longing? Perhaps someone had come in just at that moment. Could she really have intended for me to go unsatisfied?

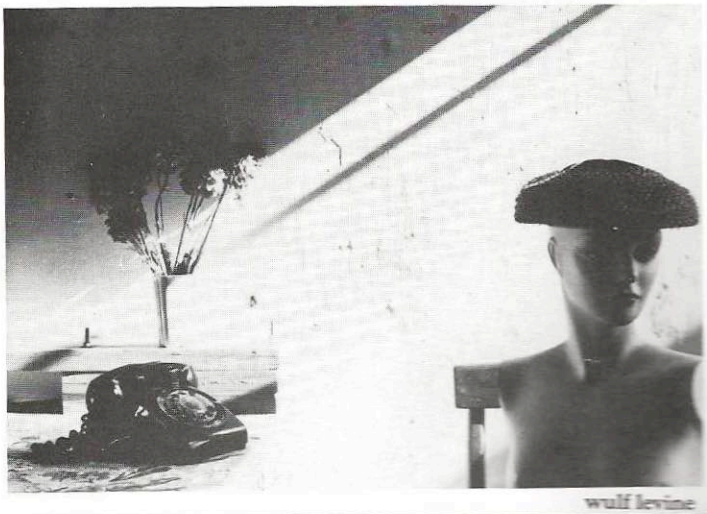
The phone rang at three a.m. I was so sleepy. "Did you stop?" Maybe if it hadn't been so late I would have lied. But I was so full of sleep and open. "No, I couldn't stop," I stammered.

"You will be disciplined" she said, and then, "Good night, sweet one."

The "sweet one" left me with a warm feeling all over. Maybe she was beginning to fall in love with me. I tried not to think of the ominous word, discipline. I have always hated that word, so full of authoritarian overtones. But then, I thought, what discipline

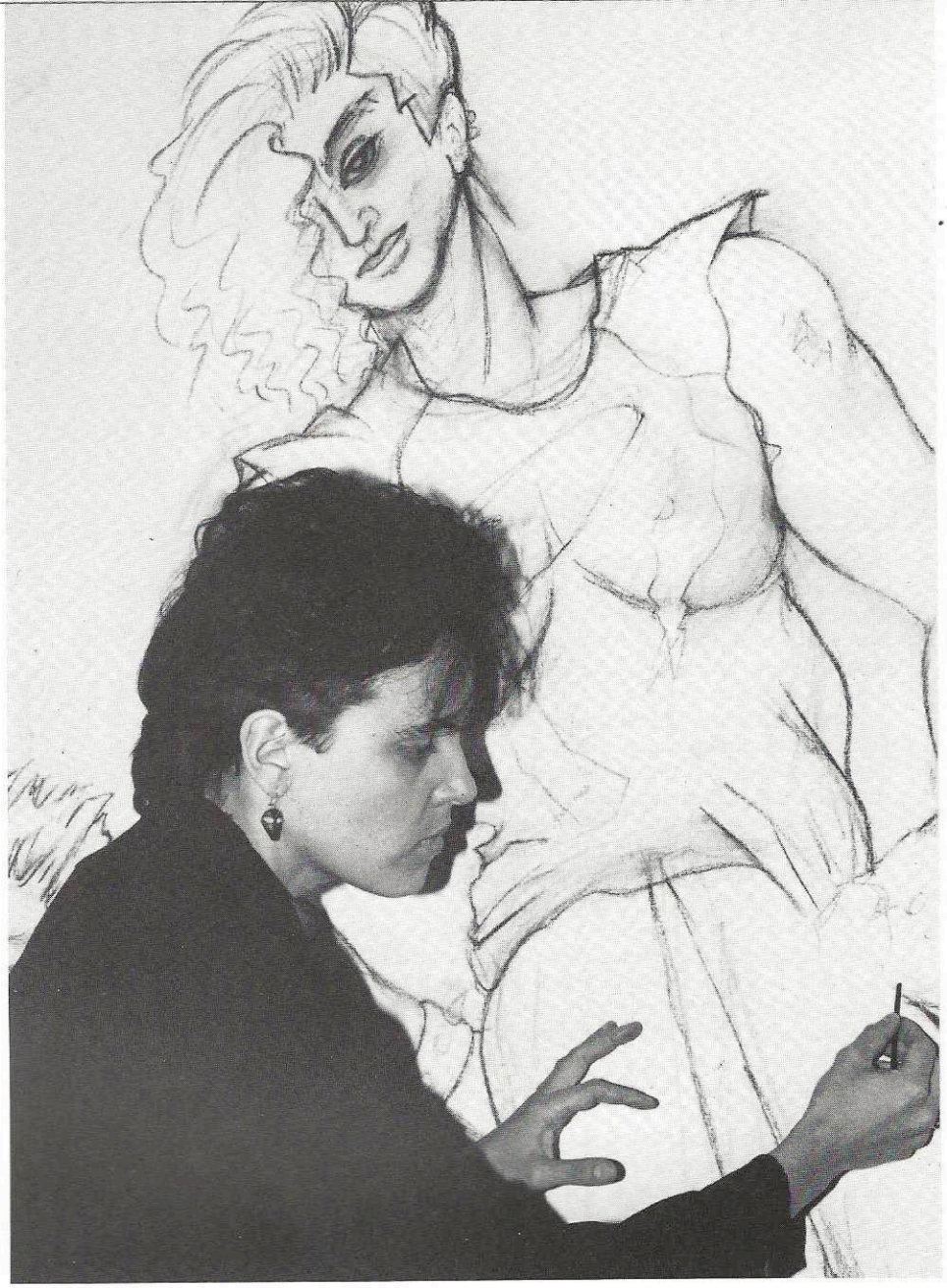
Continued on page 36

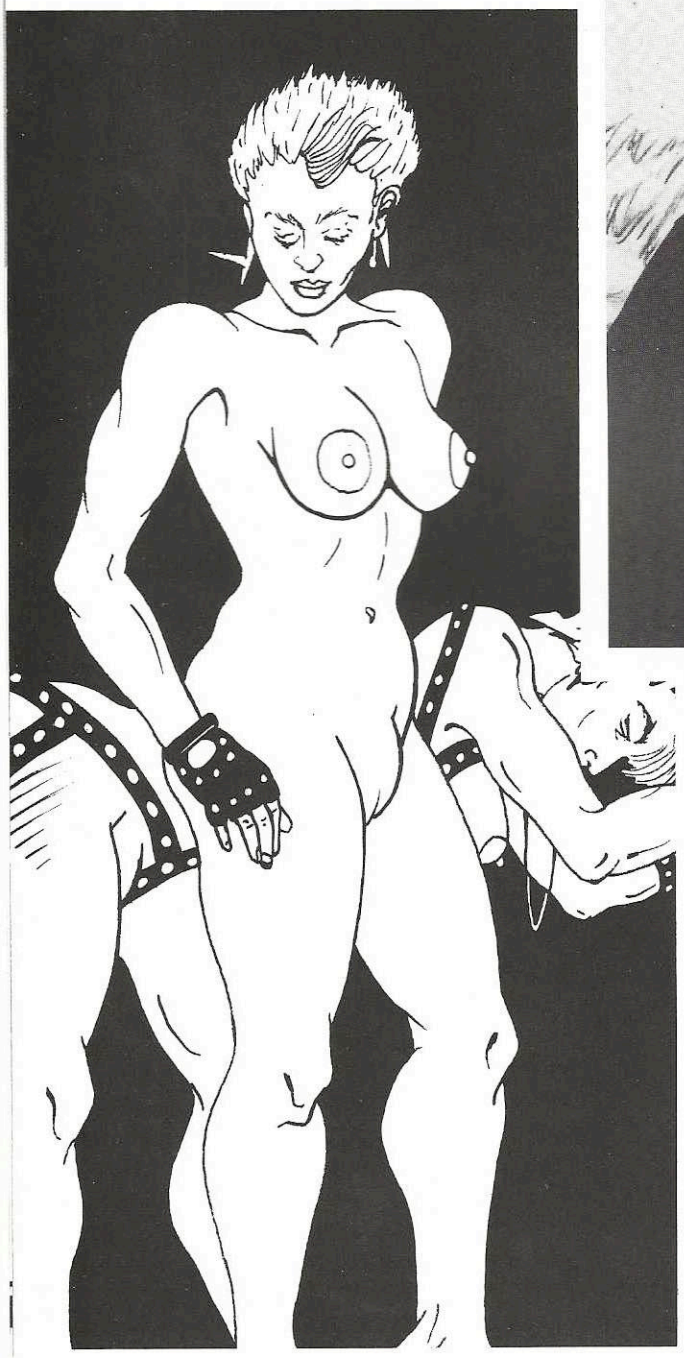


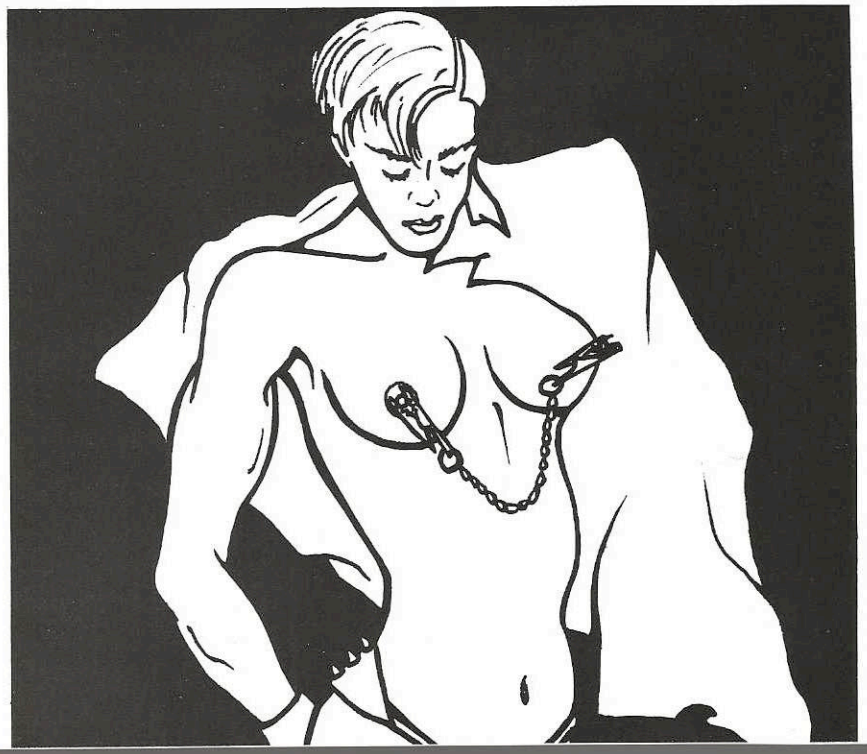


wulf levine

Laurie White was born in Massachusetts in 1954. She attended Colby College in Maine, and received her MFA from the University of Pennsylvania. She came to San Francisco in 1979 after a brief stint teaching at a girls' prep school. Since then, she has produced prolific painting, printmaking, and woodsculpture work. Many of her illustrations appear in the feminist press: *Off Our Backs, Big Mama Rag, The Lesbian Inciter, Sojurner,* and *Madness Network News.*







"I have a peculiar prediliction for stress. Not the masochistic emotional kind, but rather the sort that makes you feel a perpetual urgency. I came out of an Ivy League school that could have prepared me for a destitute and/or successful life in New York, in some kind of harrowing and eventful combination. Instead, I chose an alternative plan that had me cross the country, establish my lesbian identity, and shift the focus of my work to openly express that identity. It is not exactly what I planned, to be on the outside of the mainstream art world. As an artist, you're already alienated by the dominant culture, and as a lesbian artist using contemporary lesbian content and emphasis, you are further removed again. I see my work as dealing with desire, tension, and directness. These erotic, stylized drawings show some of the little, but important moments when contemporary lesbians connect."

Laurie White, artist

GRAPHIC WOMEN BY LAURIE WHITE

ARE YOU LONELY TONIGHT? AN EXPOSÉ

When was the last time you
heard a woman say,
"I've found my most sensitive,
honest relationships during happy hour"?

BY BARBRA LA RUE

Are you looking for love? In the marketplace for a soulmate? Would you give your eye teeth for some decent sex? The answer is *yes*, for all of us, at one time or other.

Lesbians don't have a monopoly on loneliness, but we certainly are the most sexually isolated creatures on the planet. Our famous invisibility that Queen Victoria immortalized (in 1885, Britain passed its law against homosexual acts without any reference to women, because the Queen insisted that to her knowledge, lesbianism did not exist) is at its most vicious when it comes to looking for simple sexual and emotional companionship.

Public Enemy Number One to a successful lesbian love life is that damn closet. There is a rather stiff price to pay for the serenity of keeping one's sexual identity a secret. Yet this is how 9 out of 10 gay women live their sexual lives, in virtual secrecy. Imagine being straight for one day and having to keep your attraction for the opposite sex completely under wraps. Imagine having to meet men in secret clubs where you got bombed out of your mind and prayed that you weren't recognized from some other part of your life.

But dykes are no dumb bunnies. They want their discretion, and a good time, too. There's a lot of cynicism about finding Ms. Right in the bars. When was the last time you heard a woman say, "I've found my most sensitive, honest relationships during happy hour"? In the larger cities, we've created a bit more of a social life. It is absolutely microscopic compared to the gay life for men, but we can only remember how much things have opened up over the last 15 years.

There are also professionals in the lesbian love business: Women who have devoted themselves to creating a discreet, practical service to bring women together. These clubs and personal advertisement services have been virtual lifesavers for both the lesbian who doesn't know another gay soul, and also the woman who is frustrated with haphazard encounters. Introduction services provide a forum to say who you are and what you want without fear of reprisals or scandal. They also let you be picky.

It's funny we don't commonly talk about personal advertisement, because thousands of lesbians have tried it. In *On Our Backs* first issue, we asked readers if they had ever thought of, or placed a personal ad. 56% had already experimented with advertising, and 85% had definitely considered it.

Robin Castano is the founder of *Choices*, a personal introduction service in Northern California. She interviews clients who prepare a profile sheet about themselves, along with a picture. Then they look at other profile sheets, choose people they find appealing, and if the other party agrees, they make a date. Robin is the modern matchmaker; providing guidance and support to each of her members.

Her observations were an ironically accurate profile of American sexual life. "With straight men," she says, "You see all that our culture has pumped into them comes spilling out in their choice of partners. They tend to be the most concerned with age, weight, and appearance, often when they themselves don't look after their own looks. They resist calling the woman in the profile books by name–they use the number instead. Regardless of their social or educational background, they will be swayed by a pretty face, even when they earnestly seem to be searching for compatibility.

"Straight women are just the opposite, in the sense that they will *not* choose someone who isn't from their social background. Economic status is very important, as is education. A female college graduate is not going to pick an uneducated blue-collar fellow who happens to be handsome."

"As for gay men," Robin continues, "The

"What does it take to get fucked in this town?"

There is still a great deal of embarrassment and self-doubt about personal advertisement, according to Robin. "There's a myth that you have to be desperate to take such a step, but in fact, choosing partners this way is a move of self-confidence. It indicates someone who wants to make conscious choices about their relationships."

So what are their choices? I asked Robin to make some generalizations about the clients she works with. Although she has a special dream about what her service can do for lesbians ("I would have loved to have something like this when I was single"), her business depends on all types of clients: gay/straight, men and women.

good-looking ones are just as picky as the straight men about looks. If there is one disappointment in my business, it's how people will reject each other over appearance when they look at the photos; when in real life, a 'plain person' and a 'beautiful person' might be very drawn to each other in the course of their mutual activity.

But in general, gay men have the most fun with the service. They stick their necks out more, and choose to meet the most people. Even if one person they meet from the service isn't their ideal lover, they will turn each other onto their friends."

Continued on page 40

O.K., SO WHAT DO I DO TO MEET THE WOMAN OF MY DREAMS?

1. Think of how you can put yourself forward. Instead of dwelling on all the risks you can't take, consider a few that you can. Could you join a group? There are gay organizations of every social, political, and athletic taste. Could you take out a personal ad, or join an introduction service, or make arrangements for a professional hot date? There are so many possibilities. You can have your discretion, and eat it, too.

2. Who Are You, and What Do You Want? Would you like to start off with good companionship, good sex, or a shared interest in chess? When composing a personal ad, you need to fall a little bit in love with yourself. Talk about the attractive and special attributes you possess; the parts of life that turn you on. Remember that this isn't a competition–revelation and honesty are the only things that are going to bring forth the kind of people you want to meet.

3. What if you can't think of a single thing you like about yourself, and have no idea what you want? Lighten up. You're not going to connect with anybody in this frame of mind. Either put it aside until you can answer one of the two questions, or try something very brief and experimental. One woman I know has been deluged with replies to her one-line ad that read: "Financially-secure lesbian in mid-30's seeks same." Whatever you say, you're going to get some kind of response, and this will *feel good*. Bet on it.

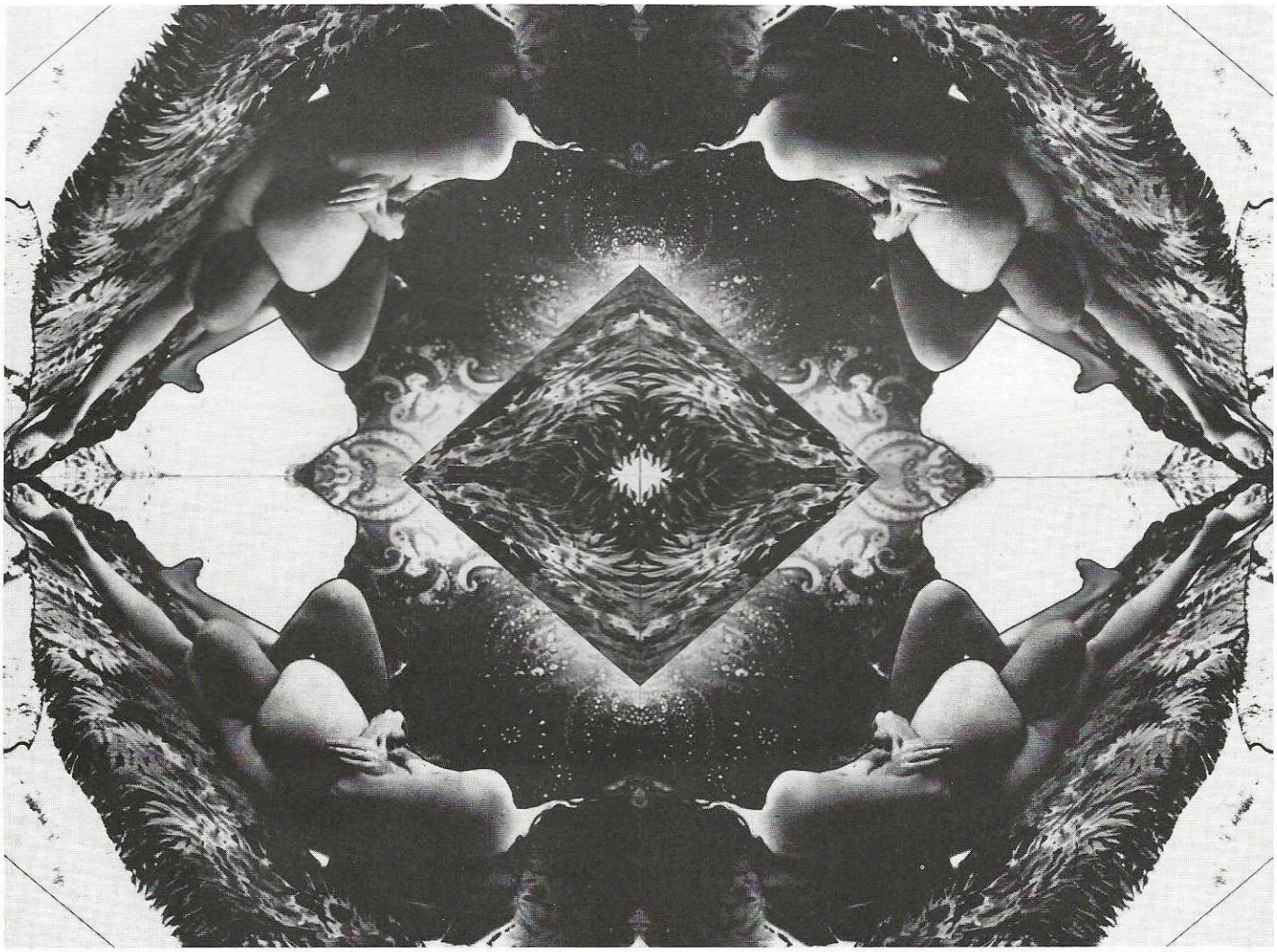
4. Get help and advice from the women in the personal introduction business. They're worldly, they're wise, and they do this *all day*.

5. What if you're saving all your money for a new pair of shoes and can't fritter your pennies on some crazy personal ad that might not work out anyway?

Our Backs is giving readers a free chance to stick their toes in the water. Up until May 20, 1985, personal ads may be placed in *On Our Backs* classified section *free of charge*. Somewhere in our international audience you are 99.9% likely to get several replies. Pucker up, and start writing.

THE SUCCUBUS

JESS WELLS



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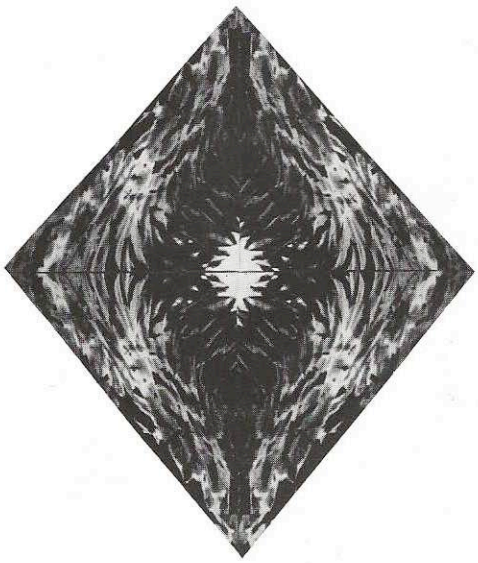

Could anyone see her hardening nipples? She swore there was a tongue running 'round and 'round its crumpled skin.

She timed her arrival to the corner well: without breaking her stride, Margarite stepped into the bus as the last passenger entered, dropped in exact change and slid into a seat alone.

There should be no reason for feeling flustered, she thought, a bit confused. Her clothes were clean and well-pressed, her hair combed in place. Even her briefcase was tidy and she was well prepared for the meeting she had called.

Well, I'm not really flustered, she puzzled, *but something feels amiss, like remnants of a bad dream that delays my breakfast, makes me forget where I've put the jam, or something. Silly really.* Margarite smoothed the collar of her tucked white shirt and its thin black bow.

There was . . . it was . . . wait, her forearm told her, it was her breast. There was a burning, in her breast, like a mouth on her nipple, and (she shifted in her seat) now a pinching feeling, was it . . . teeth on her nipple, no, of course not. Margarite looked down at her blouse, then glanced to the side (was anyone looking?) Could anyone see her hardening nipple? She swore there was a tongue running 'round and 'round its crumpled skin.

Margarite cleared her throat, straightened the crease in her slacks and pulled her briefcase in front of her.

Absurd, she thought, the flush growing in her cheeks, *I'm on the 8 Market towards Sansome St., just like every morning.* But she swore there was a mouth on her breast, circling her nipple, taking bites.

The bus lurched to a stop and Margarite braced herself with a hand on the seat in front; left it there to shield the excited breast. Maybe if she read the paper, she thought, but she didn't want to take her hand down. A woman with a large parcel edged past her seat, a young girl in tow. Businessmen, oblivious to everyone, pushed down the aisle. People were standing up now, holding the railings, their bellies at eye-level, so Margarite stared straight ahead. She couldn't move; pressed against the seat by the busy lips inside her blouse. Her breathing deepened. She was pinned, trapped by the suck, suck, bite.

I am not a prisoner, she thought, *I am Margarite LeCarr, I am going to work like any morning. I slept alone last night, in pajamas, and I do not have . . . lips on my nipples. The idea was absurd; never mind the feeling, the thought of it was preposterous. I'll read some papers for the meeting–mind over matter,* she thought, and set down the briefcase between her legs and yanked out a folder. Ah, she could move from the back of the seat. Margarite smiled. *It must have just been . . . my bloods or something.*

But the woman didn't get the folder opened before the tongue flattened and covered her entire breast with wetness, wiggling a tongue point into the crease between breast and chest. Margarite gasped, looked sideways. Her breast was being lifted up, sucked. She could feel the spittle running down her mound onto her belly. She could see it, she could; the surface of her left breast higher than the right, being held and now kneaded and squeezed. Margarite cleared her throat and pulled up her collar.

"Excuse me," Margarite said, as she gathered her things to her chest and scurried out of her seat. The woman beside her looked puzzled. Margarite pushed through the crowd, gasping and whining as her nipple was twisted. "Pardon . . . me . . ah . . oh, excuse, aah, coming through . . . back door!"

"Goodmorning Mr. Taylor," she said as she stepped into the wood and chrome elevator.

"Goodmorning, Ms. LeCarr."

"Margarite."

"Tom. Hello Harold," Margarite tried to steady herself. She turned. "Vivian, goodmorning dear." Up the floors and out the doors, the workers held their attache cases and their styrofoam coffee, raincoats over their arms, a higher class of knit suits remaining as the numbers climbed.

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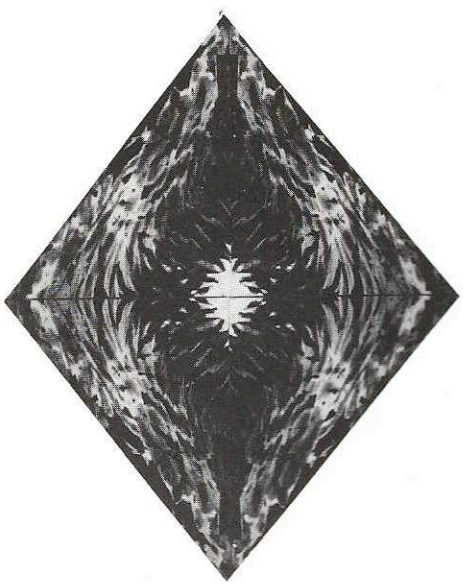

Continued from page 35

In her office, Margarite set her briefcase down as if the journey had taken months. What was going on with her body? At forty-three, her hair was graying and crow's feet cut in toward her deep-set eyes. She had a round belly and wide thighs, long fingers, a regal carriage. But this morning she felt like a girl, confused by her first blood.

Margarite poured herself coffee. Diane, her assistant, was already in: the phones were on hold and Margarite could hear the file cabinets rolling back and forth. She ran her finger across her manila files but wandered aimlessly into the front office.

"Goodmorning dear," she said softly.

"Goodmorning Marg," Diane said with a grin, spunky, looking up from the folders to study the woman's face. Diane was 35, with hair as thick as a dogs and a nose that drew a viewer up its arching smoothness to her eyes. Constantly moving, Diane always looked like she'd just gotten off the racketball court, no matter what she wore. There was always the tell-tale pink in her cheeks.

The two women knew each other's lines and wrinkles, they knew what puffy eyes in the morning meant. Diane had listened to many stories of Karen leaving Margarite and moving East, and she had been gentle during those months of pain when Margarite stared out the windows and cried during lunch.

Margarite trained Diane and pushed for her advancement as well as taking her laundry to the first floor cleaners. The two rotated breakfast and coffee chores with great ceremony but this morning, it only made Margarite feel worse.

"I forgot our breakfast," Margarite said softly, "I'm sorry, falling down on my job."

"Well, those blintzes are a hard act to follow," Diane said, flashing her brown eyes and giving her friend an out. When Margarite didn't take the bait, Diane scanned her face closer. "Bad dreams?"

"No," Margarite said hesitantly, averting her eyes. She wasn't sure what was happening. How could she explain this, even to Diane, who was her only confidant.

"Well," Diane said, shoving the file drawer closed, "no time for breakfast anyway, only twenty minutes before this fucking meeting."

"Right," Margarite said, and returned to her office, where she opened her curtains to the sun and plopped into her high-backed chair. Her coffee sat steaming on the file cabinet in the other room while she stared out at the willow trees, their tendrils languorously streaming in the breeze. They dipped and skittered across the morning.

This was not her imagination, she reasoned. And nothing unusual had happened to precipitate it. The night before she had not dreamed, she had not touched herself or slept naked. She had lain motionless–the perfectly smooth and tucked sheets told her–for eight hours and thirty minutes, the same celibate night she had lived for the 9 months since Karen had left her for a new job and a new woman on the East Coast. Her body was something that sat behind her desk, sat at a cafe table, lay cold under sheets at night. It was better this way, easier.

Sex wasn't even something she thought about, except occasionally when she was in a crowd of lesbians and she found herself imagining things–her hand against a woman's cheek while she stood talking about business, or the shape of the breasts on a woman across the room, or her hand slipping across the small of a woman's back, embracing, touching, kissing anyone in range. It happened rarely. She was just more controlled than that.

But this...this attention, well it was wrong, it was bizarre. Next time she would have to be sure it didn't show. Margarite turned her chair from the window. Next time? she asked herself, you're planning on it? Margarite remembered the feeling of her breast being lifted and a flush rose through her body.

Now, what was this feeling...no, not again, she thought, and smoothed the front of her blouse. No, it was not her breasts, but there was a tingling...in her legs. Margarite sat back in her chair. Like the touch of a feather tipped with down, the sensation ran up her ankles to her calves and played behind her knees, bringing her blood up inch by inch. Suddenly, it teased the curve of her hipbone and drew across the top of her thigh. Her mouth opened and her eyes glazed over. It stroked the side of her neck; she lay her head back and gave her temples to it. To what, she thought, to whom?

It brushed her lip; she shivered and turned away, the feather proceeded and the willows outside draped themselves through the air like a dozen sofa boas. The feather took her back and forth, rhythmically, in long sweeps up the front of her body, then down her shoulders and across her buttocks, as if she were not sitting, as if she were not clothed, not on the twelfth floor with things to do. Margarite swayed in her chair, eyes closed, the muscles of her neck standing out, red from ears to chin, little beads of sweat gathering under her nostrils. She allowed herself to be lulled into the rhythm.

Just then, her tormentor switched from feather's down to quill tip, and dug into her shoulder. The pain burned her skin. Diane walked into the room with Margarite's coffee cup. The quill scraped from shoulder to base of the spine.

"Margarite, you left your..."

Margarite shuddered. As she grimaced, the phantom plunged fingers into her cunt, up where it was wet from her bus ride. The pain drained hot from her shoulder to her vulva, giving her a bigger hole and a throb like a drum. She slammed her hands on the table.

"Ahh, I'm not well," Margarite stammered, "I mean I..." she watched Diane take inventory of her flushed face and unfocused eyes. Oh not here, Margarite pleaded silently. What am I saying? Not anywhere, leave me alone.

"I need to go home," she said, pleading.

"Home? You? But the meeting!" Diane replied, confused, shocked.

"Oh, yes. Well...you can handle it. Yes," Margarite said, brightening. "That will be fine. We've been over the proposals a number of times, Diane. You helped write them. It's a fine opportunity for the board to see..."

"Margarite," Diane said, warning.

"...to see how valuable you are. How capable. It's a wonderful idea," she said, standing up and searching for her papers. "Really Diane, this can't be helped" she said, not really certain what she meant.

"Is it your stomach," Diane asked.

"No."

"The flu? Your joints feel alright? Margarite, you're a wreck. You don't look sick, you look absolutely frazzled."

The two women stood silently while Margarite packed her briefcase, hoping it at least resembled the papers she brought in this morning, trying to lay out the proper folders for the meeting. The stalemate continued, a tight silence in the office, until Margarite picked up her report and handed it across the desk.

"Here, you'll need this."

"Oh god." Diane paced the width of the room, exasperated. "Alright...I'll call you a cab."

Margarite sat back in the taxi, her beige linen coat draping on the seat, her legs crossed at the ankles. The cab plunged up Market Street, the reverse of the route she had just taken. *This is the first time that I have ever, she*

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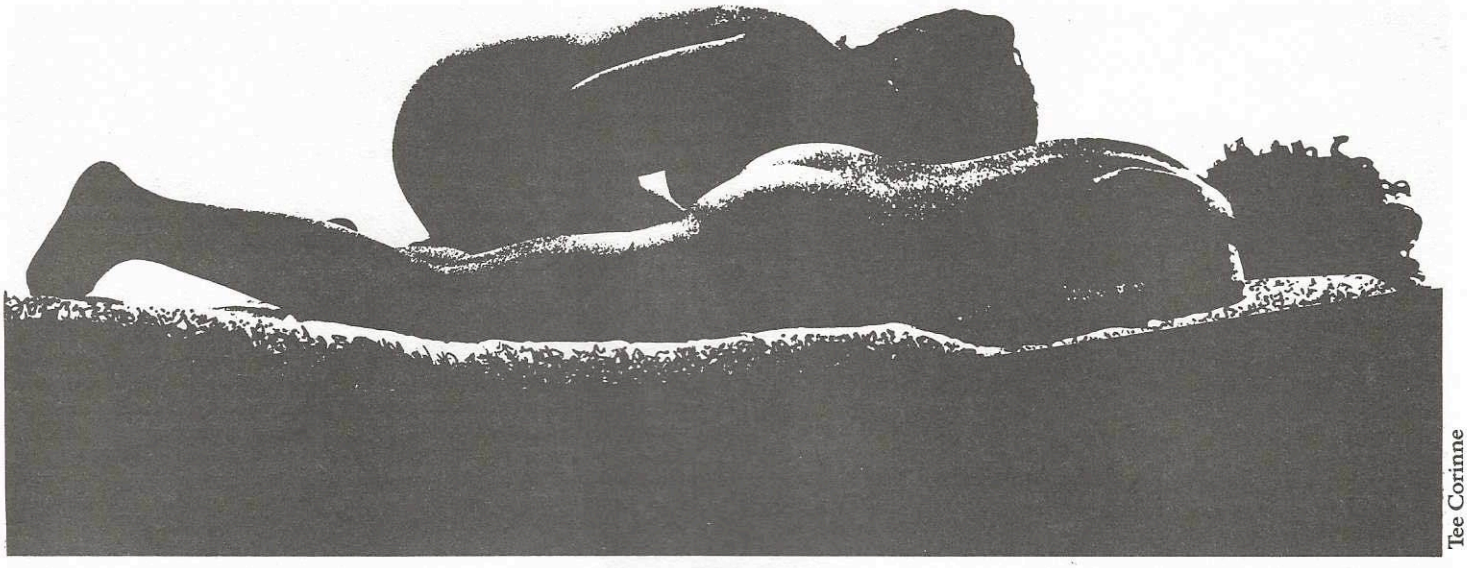

Tee Corinne

thought, taken a day off work for... nothing... for sex. Margarite was incredulous. In how many years of being sexual, she thought, and why now? And how could she be expecting to... and so didn't that mean that she was, an accomplice and so making love with... this phantom, this... succubus.

Yes that's what it is, a succubus, a woman spirit who comes to seduce in a woman's sleep. She had read about them in reference to the saints. A nun locked in convent cell and denied the world except a view of the herb garden from her barred window, would be visited at night by the spirits of women. The succubus came when the nun had spent the day watching the bent backs of the novices in the fields, torn by the sight of women so far away while her pen and ink and scriptures sat idle. The nun would go to bed early, slipping under her coarse cotton sheet, still in her hairshirt. She would toss and turn. A touch would come to her, her temperature would rise, "No, no, I musn't", she would murmur, but turn her buttocks to the moon. The succubus would laugh and hovering above the length of her body, set her mouth on the nun's ass.

In the morning, the nun, her eyes sunken from lack of sleep, her hair wild, would be found in the corner of her cell by the novices who brought her breakfast. Gripping the window sill, her neck covered with black and blue bites, kiss marks, black and blue shoulders and forearms, the nun would grit her teeth against her words. The novices, prohibited from stepping inside the threshold, would stare open-mouthed at the woman's bare legs and cold toes.

"Sister Angelina! Do you... require anything?"

The taxi that took Margarite home pulled smoothly into the drive. She sat very still in the back.

"'Scuse me, Ma'am?"

"Yes?... oh, of course, how much do I.. oh, I see, $4.50," Margarite fumbled in her briefcase. "Keep the change." She leaned forward with the money and caught a glimpse of herself in the rear-view, her neck purple with bites. She dropped the bill onto the front seat and pulled up her collar, her breath caught in her chest.

"Ah, Ma'am, it's a bit short here. That's $5.50."

"Oh. Yes. Excuse me, let me give you two. Thanks again," she said weakly and slid out of the door. She opened the collar of her coat and pulled on her clothes, seeing just what she expected–black and blue marks all over her shoulders. As the taxi drove away, she stood clutching her lapels.

What I see, I am, she thought, *and what I think, I feel. Oh Goddess, this is very dangerous.*

Margarite stood in the drive looking up at the second floor of the peach Victorian where her curtains slowly blew in and out of the open windows. It had been years since she had seen her tiny front lawn in the daylight of a working day. She opened the front door and climbed the polished stairs to her apartment. Everything was the same as she had left it: the plants at the top of the stairs, the French doors open to the front living room, pillows just so on the green velvet sofa, armchairs, fireplace, candlesticks, closed and polished writing desk–it was all the same, but so peaceful, Margarite felt she was disturbing something. She looked at the light on the polished floors, the way the flowers looked in the afternoon, everything in the room a different color than she saw in the evening. She set her briefcase down on the sofa, hung her coat up, her short heals clacking on the floor. She turned back to her living room. She felt like an intruder.

Margarite moved to the china cabinet by the fireplace and lifted down a tumbler, opened another cabinet for the Scotch and strode into the kitchen for ice.

Back in the living room, Margarite kicked off her shoes, plopped into an armchair, and set her feet on a square footrest. *I guess I must work like my mother, she thought. Four years without a single break.*

Her mother would come home tired and disgruntled, and ease herself into her overstuffed chair with lace doilies on the arms. Mrs. LeCarr would fold her coat over the arm, pry her shoes off with her stocking-ed toes and sigh.

"Gite, baby" she cooed to the young Margarite, waiting by the television, "come rub Mother's feet, please baby, I work so hard."

Margarite would turn on the television and hurry to pull up the ottoman. This was the finest part of the day. Mother worked so hard, she deserved attention and Margarite was happy to give it to her. The little girl scanned the t.v. guide every afternoon: what would Mother like? She prepared the woman's special chair; polished her table. When Mrs. LeCarr finally came home, the little girl would hold back, expectantly, waiting for her favorite phrase, "Gite, baby, come rub Momma's feet, please baby." Flushed and silent, Margarite would hurry across the room, sit on the flowered ottoman at the woman's side and grasp one of her ankles. She would knead and rub and hold the foot like a breakable object, like a lamp you rub to make wishes come true.

"Momma?"

"Yes, pet," the woman sighed, stroking her daughters head but never moving her eyes from the set.

"I can't do a good job through these stockings."

"What dear? Oh, well, alright. You can take them off, Gite." The two had a special ritual. Mrs. LeCarr would remain totally still as Gite slid her little hand under the tight A-line skirt to her garter belt. Or the woman would slowly pull her skirt up to expose the clasp, one side at a time. The little girl's eyes took in every inch. Gite was so gentle, the soft warm thigh making her hands tingle. She grasped the black garter with both hands. Gite's body was hot everywhere, her nose overcome with the smell of her mother. She slid the sheer stocking down the thighs, dragging her little fingers along the flesh, over the knee, across the calf and off. Gite let it accordion fold onto the floor. Mrs. LeCarr leaned on her other buttocks to

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POEM 1

this morning I awoke
to you in a darkened room
lying on your stomach
arms draped above your head
my hands kneaded your neck
down your strong back
moving over
your soft brown buttocks
i traced the line to
your thigh
you raised your hips
enough for my tongue
to part your lips
and taste
your sweet wetness

i felt the bumps rising
on your skin
as i moved my breasts across
your body
our sweat on my fingers
as i entered you
gasped
the sound of your panting
moaning lightly
rushed my heart
through my pussy
now your back
turned and arched
i could smell
the strength of our passion
the edge of my tongue
grazed
your swollen clit
licking pulling burning
you came

this morning i dreamt of your
breath

LISA KIM

Continued from page 37

receive her daughter on the other side.

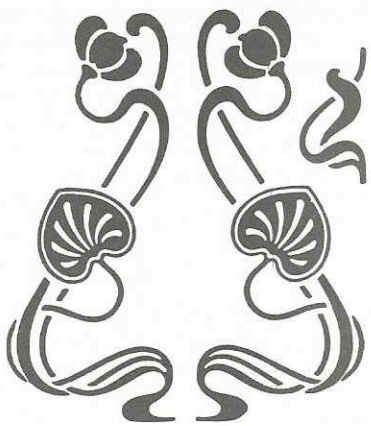
Now, with her hands on flesh, Gite would massage with a new vigor, rolling the soft skin between her thumb and finger, stroking the calves, pushing into the arches, pouring all the energy, the expectation of the afternoon, into her mother's skin. "I work so hard," her mother would say, "I deserve my..." –whatever it was at the time: her Sunday sleep, her fancy food. Work made it right, and for Gite, hard work made this skin and touch and caress and woman smells possible; hard work meant Gite's hand slipping into the tight, hot space between the hem and the panty leg.

Today, in her own apartment, forty-three and ill at ease, Margarite sat forward in her seat. *You do not fantasize about your mother,* she thought. Margarite glanced at the bruises on her shoulders and, setting her Scotch glass on her knee, felt her shoulder blades for the beginning of the scratch. *You've never touched your mother above the knees and you better not start thinking about it now, Goddamn it.* Margarite leaned her head against the chairback and closed her eyes.

"Momma, I can't do a good job through these panties," she murmured.

'Alright dear, you can take them off.'

Margarite continued. *"Let me sit between your legs, you work so hard; let me nuzzle inside your folds. I want to see your head against your chair, I want spit sitting in the creases of your lips. My mouth on your cunt, my lips teasing your lips, fingers pulling your hair. Spread your legs further–that's right–touch my ears with your thighs. Yes, yes, drape me back across the ottoman, my pigtails on the rug. I know the tops of these thighs to slip my hand around the back to your buttocks one hand in back, one hand in front, wiggling into your cunt, I dive again, my fingers plunging, fist sucked back up where it belongs, fucking you...you scream for ME at night.*



Margarite opened her eyes. Wide. She was... good Goddess, she breathed, she was draped backwards across the ottoman, the afternoon sun striping her belly and legs in her executive clothes. The Scotch glass was spilled on the floor. The smell of a woman was heavy in the air. Margarite clambered up off the floor with difficulty. Her hand... was wet. Viscous come clung to the webs of her fingers, curled into a fist. It can't be, she thought, turning in a circle, scanning the room for a woman she knew she wouldn't find. The succubus was in control, and could make her fantasies more real than she had ever wanted. Tears welled up in Margarite's eyes. *I do not cry,* she thought, *but look at me, she turned to the mirror. I don't have sex, but I've been fucked on a bus, in a cab, in my office. I'm covered with bites and bruises and scratches and, as she eyed her hand with suspicion, I fuck.* She wasn't really in control anymore. She knew that now. Even though she felt she was totally in charge of herself, her cunt had always broadcast her need to her constantly, feeling so swollen and insistent it was as if it walked a few inches in front of her. Now Margarite knew that she had never been in control of her body–she had consistently denied its needs but had never controlled its desire. Now the succubus had taken away even her ability to deny herself. She was being fucked and, she smelled her hand, she was fucking. Truly now, she was living what she thought and feeling what she saw. ◄

BEAUTY'S PUNISHMENT: THE FURTHER EROTIC ADVENTURES OF SLEEPING BEAUTY
by A.N. Roquelaure
E.P. Dutton

There is very little good S/M fiction, so the S/M reading public was treated to a rare surprise last spring with the publication of *The Claiming of Sleeping Beauty*, by the pseudonymous A.N. Roquelaure. From the moment that the handsome Prince wakes Sleeping Beauty with something much less chaste than the traditional kiss, the book is a nonstop feast of erotic delights. Roquelaure is said to be a woman and a famous author, and these books are clearly the work of a literary virtuoso. They are elegant, graceful, and hot, hot, hot.

The Claiming of Sleeping Beauty ends with our heroine in trouble and the promise of a sequel. Sequels are often disappointing. But if anything, *Beauty's Punishment*, which resumes the tale, is even better than its predecessor. It is exquisitely written, emotionally and sexually sophisticated, and intensely arousing. Any self-respecting pervert who can get through this book without resorting to frequent masturbation deserves the William Acton Memorial Award for Self-Restraint. (Acton was one of many Victorian writers who crusaded to eliminate masturbation.)

Voluntary, consensual, sexual sadomasochism is not well tolerated in this society. Consequently, much S/M writing employs a device I call the "S/M utopia." This idea first occurred to me when I read about "Sandmutopia," a fictional gay male S/M society, in the periodical *DungeonMaster*. An S/M utopia is an exotic setting in which S/M is the norm. The social world is divided into dominants and submissives, whips and manacles are readily at hand, and the society is organized to facilitate the bondage and discipline of slaves and the erotic gratification of all. Auction blocks, punishment stations and cages are public conveniences; slave trainers are public officials; and interactions between the erotic castes are eased by an elaborate system of sexual etiquette. The remote castles and chateaux of so much S/M porn function as settings for such S/M societies. The other times and places of science fiction often harbor S/M-positive cultures, ranging from the charm of Samuel Delaney's Neveryon to John Norman's rather dreary planet of Gor. The roster of known S/M worlds has been immeasurably enhanced by the additional of Roquelaure's fairy-tale erotic universe.

So far, Beauty's world consists of a number of petty kingdoms whose social customs are vaguely medieval. A queen presides over the most powerful domain. All future rulers of the minor principalities are sent to her court for a period of training, during which time these young princes and princesses are the sexual slaves of the queen and her court. This system of human tribute means that all submissives are royalty. Slaves are referred to as Prince and Princess So-and-So, which should amuse anyone familiar with the spoiled, willful and sexually demanding bottoms who populate real S/M communities.

Slaves who are especially intractable are sent to the Village nearby for more severe training. At the end of the first book, Beauty deliberately flouts authority in order to be sent to the Village, where the second book is set. As it turns out, the Village slaves are a spirited bunch who are happier under a more stringent regime. Both Beauty and Prince Tristan, her male counterpart, chose to go to the Village because their lovers in the court are too lenient. One moral of this story is that serious bottoms require exacting tops. Another is that masochists do not merely consent; they pursue submission with great determination. Much of the eroticism of S/M derives from the interplay between cooperation and coercion. Roquelaure's star slaves make active decisions to deepen their servitude, and they are rewarded with abundant and enchanting cruelties when they do.

The two *Beauty* books reflect the realities of S/M culture in many respects. The period of service is limited and temporary. Slaves are treated according to conventions that prohibit mistreatment, bodily harm or permanent injury. Submissives are kept in a state of unrelenting sexual excitement. Periodically, just when things are getting very heavied out, everyone comes up for air. The characters never step out of role far enough to vitiate the power of the fantasy. But they do slip out enough to get or give reassurance, express their feelings or relieve some tension.

In many respects, *Story of O* was an S/M novel for the '50s. All submissives were women and, with the exception of Anne Marie, all dominants were men, and everyone was heterosexual. The *Beauty* books are S/M for the '80s. Everyone is functionally bisexual. The chief top, the Queen, and the chief bottom, Beauty, are both women. But there are slaves and dominants of both genders throughout. There is no hint of any notion that men are more inclined to sadism or women to masochism. Role switching occurs.

Although these are not exactly "gay" books, they have ample gay content and will be of great interest to both gay male and lesbian readers. The mutual seduction of Prince Tristan and his master, Nicolas, occupies much of *Beauty's Punishment*. The gay male sex and romance are deftly handled. I wish I were as dazzled by the lesbian encounters. In the first book, none of the lesbian activity leads to orgasm, in contrast to the straight and gay male exchanges. Lesbian S/M is more fully developed in *Beauty's Punishment*, but it still lacks some of the depth and intensity of the heterosexual and gay male interactions. The lesbian scenes are among the finest in S/M literature. Nevertheless, Roquelaure does seem to not quite grasp the engaging power of lesbian passion.

There is something very special about these books, at once so light and yet so haunting. Sex has rarely been treated with such a sure touch. Like its predecessor in the series, *Beauty's Punishment* ends with a cliffhanger. Another sequel is promised for next year. This "Perils of Pauline" format is a real tease, and I am already panting for the next installment. We can only hope that the author does not tire of this game, and that the publication of a new *Beauty* book will become one of the annual rites of spring. ◄

Gayle Rubin

Postscript

This review was written a year ago, for the *Advocate*, and it is a thrill to be able to announce the imminent publication of the third and final volume of the adventures of Beauty. *Beauty's Release* will be available from E.P. Dutton in June, 1985, for $8.95. The Beauty trilogy is a *tour de force* and an instant erotic classic. These books may be the most significant S/M fiction since *Story of O*. Although the denouement in *Beauty's Release* depends on heterosexual privilege, it is nonetheless an uplifting and inspired ending. If you want some of the most accomplished and imaginative sexual literature ever written, get these books.

—G.R.

Continued from page 33

Finally, the lesbians. Robin says, "Gay women are the shyest and most reticent clients. They make the fewest choices to meet others. And take the least risks."

Inspiring, eh? Do Amazons turn into raggedy ann dolls when it comes to their sexual/emotional lives? Keep in mind that the women who join services such as *Choices* are the bold ones, the initiators.

Perhaps because of the determination and faith it takes to use such a service, most women's introduction clubs cater to the woman interested in a serious relationship, rather than a casual affair. *The Wishing Well* is the 10-year-old Grande Dame of lesbian intro services, and their forté is the lesbian marriage. Members of the *Wishing Well* receive a cozy, family-style, quarterly magazine; that along with detailed personal ads, includes loving messages from the tenders and owners of the *Wishing Well* (Gloria and Laddie, who met through the club), as well as book reviews, wedding photos, and devoted letters of praise from satisfied members.

The Wishing Well is the first place I've seen as many self-descriptions from women in their 40's-60's as there are from the younger generation. The detail and variety of each woman's description gave a moving glimpse into the scope of lesbian lives that we are so pitifully unaware of.

Many members indicate a willingness to relocate for the right woman, and *Wishing Well* encourages this. Don't let geographics stand in your way! Laddie was originally a schoolteacher in Pennsylvania who was the only lesbian she knew of. She moved out to California to join the founder of the *Wishing Well*, Pat, who started the business on a small educational grant. Later, when Laddie ran the business herself, she met her future lover, Gloria through the magazine. Gloria had recently left a convent in Southern California, and was just beginning to find other lesbian women. She eventually moved up north to join Laddie.

The Wishing Well is promoted as an alternative to the *Well of Loneliness*, the famous novel by Radclyffe Hall that for many generations of lesbians supposedly defined our tortured psyches and isolated existence. As melodramatic as this book seems today, certain themes are very contemporary. The heroine, "Stephen", has sexual needs she can barely express, let alone satisfy. Her erotic identity, rather than leading her to a life of wild decadence, is instead one of lonely, alienated, yet somehow noble celibacy.

In case you haven't noticed, women don't talk much about sex in their personal ads. We're devastatingly subtle. We don't advertise for "greek and french action"– we're more likely to ask for "a feminine woman," or "a soft butch." Robin Castano commented, "Naming a physical characteristic that you do or don't like is usually part of an underlying sexual feeling you have. If a client turns down an introduction without naming a reason why, it is usually a matter of physical appeal. Most people aren't comfortable talking about it, but I believe we're all drawn to certain types of looks."

Lesbians will also be brazen in their ads when it comes to asking for lots of kissing and hand-holding. But where else do our mouths and hands have to go? *Choices* and *Wishing Well* both defend their services as dignified places where one seeks a "whole relationship", not just a dead end sexual encounter. What's strange is that advertising for a "whole relationship" seems to include everything *but* sex. Are our sexual communication skills really so good that given the right mutual hobbies and interests, any two people can have a great time in bed? Am I the only woman who ever loved someone to pieces, but couldn't get turned onto them to save my life? Something is definitely amiss.

Sexual ads placed by lesbians can be found. Who's to say whether these women are singlemindedly horny or whether they were disappointed by one too many ads that promised "long, sensitive, walks on the beach".

Just Us is an Atlanta-based contact magazine for "the Truly Liberated Woman." "Truly Liberated" is the euphemism here for "let's talk about sex". There are still scores of ads seeking well-rounded serious relationships, but there is a lot more candidness about physical preferences and sexual turn-ons. *Just Us* also encompasses the modern twilight world of lesbianism: bisexuals, married women with or without understanding husbands, and self-defined female swingers. This is a marked difference from the *Wishing Well*, where most often, bisexuals are listed in the same group of no-nos as hard drugs and alcoholism. There appears to be literally a trial of tears where one woman has left another for a man. On the other hand, there is a huge demand for feminine, discreet women who can pass under heterosexual eyes. Women who call themselves dykes, or political lesbians, are in the slim minority. Every once in a while, you'll see an ad that starts out with, "What Does it Take to Get Fucked in this Town," which may well be the last word in political savvy.

The new breed of personal ads that ask for sex, nothing more, have stirred up quite a controversy. Depending on your perspective, it's either vulgar, the latest sexist malaise, or the brilliant dawn of a new age in lesbian sexuality.

Cheryl and Chris are proponents of the latter. They have started what must be the world's first and only escort service exclusively for women desiring women. Their West Coast operation is like the other introduction clubs in that in exchange for a fee they will provide a very personal, individualized service. Only in their case, you arrange for an evening fantasy, or an afternoon delight. You name the fantasy, and you've got a date.

What is a lesbian escort service like? Cheryl describes her service as "A luxury item, in the same vein as getting a massage. You pay for my undivided attention. There's no responsibility or performance anxiety for the client to deal with, because it's all for her. The woman's pleasure is our only concern."

What happened when they first advertised their service? Chris recalls, "A lot of women called up who wanted to work for us! I guess everyone wants to be a gigolo. Some people told us we're ahead of our time, but I think we're right *on* time." Cheryl continued, "Morals and economics have changed for women. A lot of professional women are putting their energy into their careers instead of emotional attachments with lovers. But they still have their sexual needs; they still need someone to spoil them every once in a while. The boys have always had so much to choose from, but we've had nothing."

What's the difference between working an escort service for women as opposed to men? "Men are more simple creatures, I suppose," replies Cheryl. "They literally get off easier. Women are more complex. They show their vulnerability more, they care about what everyone thinks of them, but they have a hard time doing something for themselves."

When Chris looks you in the eye and says, "I can make love to a woman like her very best lover."– for a fee, and with all discretion–it's hard not to believe her. It's refreshing to meet two women who've paid their dues in the sex business and are now sharing their sexual communication talents with other lesbians.

Actually, all the women interviewed for this article were exceptionally committed to an ideal about women that motivates their business. They are all feminists of the most basic definition. They know that a lot of their potential audience thinks that mixing business with sex/relationships is distasteful, if not downright sinful. Well, the professionals in the love business think this motion is naive, and guaranteed to stick you in a rut. After touring the turf they walk on, this reporter is more than willing to agree. ◄

your cunt
lowers
onto
my face
your thighs
become seashells
i hold to
my ears
the ocean roars
and i
grow gills

Barbara Ruth

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Continued from page 15

remedies that are very effective in treating common vaginal conditions. Plain white yogurt spooned into the vagina with a speculum can be helpful in controlling a yeast overgrowth. Many women find douching with herbal teas such as goldenseal, a greenish herb that is soothing to mucous membrane linings, excellent for treating bacterial vaginal infections. A clove or garlic used as a vaginal suppository works wonders for some women on bacteria and trichomonas, as does Betadine, a non-prescription iodine-based solution.

Some women who suffer from chronic vaginal infections have found that nothing short of a major diet change, testing for food allergies and toxic metals in their system, regular strenuous exercise, and a reduction in the amount of or effects of stress in their lives—goals difficult at best for many of us to be able to achieve—will begin to bring them closer to controlling these conditions. Some women find that douching after sex with goldenseal or inserting a goldenseal tablet as a suppository is very helpful in preventing infection. There are prescription vaginal creams available through a physician, should an infection prove to be beyond the scope of a home remedy. A note of caution: Flagyl, an oral drug used to treat trichomonas, and now being recommended to physicians for the treatment of bacteria vaginal infections, has been found to be carcinogenic or cancer-causing in lab animals. For this reason, feminist clinics and health providers caution against the use of Flagyl, especially since there are so many equally effective and safer alternatives, such as Betadine or garlic.

Being able to recognize vaginal infections early by doing vaginal self-examination enables many women to nip an infection in the bud before it progresses to a point that may warrant a practitioner's help.◄

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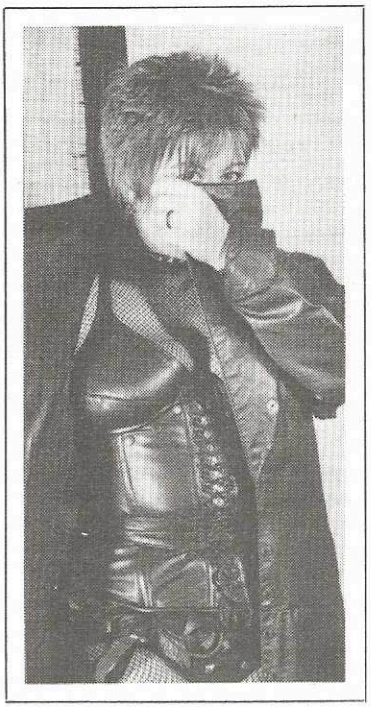

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Continued from page 29

could she do over the phone? I could take verbal abuse. And if she wanted to abuse me physically, that would mean she would have to be present, and by this time I was so much wanting to see her again, to put that voice and vocabulary to her face, hands, and the smell of her.

The bell rang at ten-thirty that morning. It was not Clare. A strange woman pushed her way into my apartment. She was dressed in heavy leather pants and jacket, and wore a wide brown belt around her waist. She was a tough looking woman; the kind I have always avoided out of fear. As soon as she was inside the house, she began to undo her belt. I watched her in the same way a mouse watches a snake, too stunned to move. "Get into the bedroom and undress," she ordered. There was nothing melodious or mysterious about her voice. It was blatantly dominating, demanding to be obeyed. I stammered some protest, and she grabbed me by my hair and pulled, hard. "Look, this is pretty boring for me. But Clare tells me to come, I come. Now be a good girl and do what you're told. You must deserve what I'm about to give you. Now take those clothes off so we can get this over with."

Then she began. I was lying across my bed, spread out across the dreams and nightmares of my sleep, while the belt hit me again and again, my ass, my legs, a target for this relentless blistering. She would stop for a while, and then begin again, only with a different rhythm, so that I was always unprepared for it, I could never get used to it. The most humiliating part for me was that she did not desire me, she was only doing this as a job for Clare. Perhaps she too was one of Clare's lovers, only at a different stage, or used for a different purpose. Jealousy as well as rage tore through me.

When it was over, I begged her to touch the places on me she had lashed so unmercifully. She only laughed.

"Please, just touch me, I'll do anything, I'll suck your cunt, anything you want, please just touch me." I could not bear for this woman to leave without some human contact. But she put the brown belt around her waist again and laughed at me. "I never touch one of Clare's girls" she said, and she walked out the door.

Five minutes later the phone rang. I let it ring three times before I answered it. I knew it was Clare, calling to gloat. I felt so humiliated. What I had been willing to do for that strange woman just to have her touch me made me feel even more out of control.

"Next time, answer the phone after one ring, if you want to hear from me again." These words, so callous, so cold, after what I had just experienced. They went through me like a sliver of glass works its way under the nails. It felt like an icicle shoved up my ass. "Tell me what you are feeling" she said, in a soft voice, and everything came tumbling out. The pain, the humiliation, the hatred I felt for her as the belt slashed across my ass, and the passion and longing I felt, the love.

Her voice turned soft and passionate. She told me how much she would like to touch my bruised ass and legs. How she would like to run her fingernails across every ridge, what her hands would do to my breasts and clitoris and how then they would move inside me and stay there for a long time. She promised me, if I would be good, she would be good to me one day. So soft her voice was, so deep and rich, even in my bruised condition it sent deep tremors throughout my body.

"Open your legs. Wide. Feel how my voice is connected to your clit. Feel the warmth from your whipping. Touch your ass and feel the marks that will stay with you for a long time. Everytime you touch yourself on the ass you will think of my voice, now, commanding you to be open to me, to open wider and deeper than you have ever opened to anyone. Put your finger on your clitoris and rub it hard, as hard as you can. Pinch it, even though it hurts. Are you doing this?"

"Yes," I answered, although my breath was coming so fast I could hardly speak. "Yes, I am doing what you want."

My ass was hot and burning still from the discipline. My hand moved excitedly around

my clitoris and inside my cunt.

"Stop now," she said, and hung up.

I let the phone drop back on its receiver, and let my hand, no, forced my hand, to drop back to the bed. I looked at it for a long time, trying to understand how it had happened, that this hand, which had always given me so much pleasure, had been taken from me, taken over by a voice, a deep dark voice like a river. I took a shower, still trembling with desire and hunger, and waited. I knew I was waiting for the next phone call. I believed Clare. Someday, if I am good enough, she will be good to me. She will let my hand go all the way, relieving me of the painful desire building up in me.

Finally, I understood, Perhaps she will call next week or next month. Surely she will not make me wait as long as a year. I believe in Clare, believe in her voice, her vocabulary. My life is now an ear for Clare, one ear of her many ears. If I am really good, someday she will let me make love to her, briefly, in a public rest room, or a storage area. When I transgress, I will have to admit it. Sometimes I will not be able to help myself. The desire is so strong. Then she will send that strange woman to me, to whip me, to punish me. Or maybe it will be a series of strange women. None of them will want me, will care about the body they will be marking. But afterward, Clare will call me, and her voice will be so soft, so kind. ◄

Continued from page 13

"helping women respect each other's needs and sensibilities."

These remarkably moderate approaches, along with a number of other signposts not discussed here, suggest that sex conservatives have lost the stranglehold on feminist thought they had a few years ago. The tide may be turning.

The leading lights of the anti-porn-and-S/M movement have done serious harm to their cause with outlandish rhetoric and divisive tactics: making simplistic, insulting equations between personal taste and political ideology; banning books and harassing non-conforming booksellers; lending *de-facto* ammunition and support to right-wing politicians. Increasing numbers of their sympathizers are becoming embarrassed by their practical extremism and dissatisfied with their theoretical narrowness.

While sex conservatives have lost respect, sex radicals have gained it. Sexual minorities of all kinds have continued to write, discuss, organize and explore with a great deal more flexibility, subtlety and respect for dissent than have their opponents (as amply proved by last year's conflict at Michigan). More and more women in the middle are open to the notion of "benign sexual variation," as writer Gayle Rubin puts it. Combining reason, vision and persuasion, sex radicals are starting to look like the good guys, more rational and less dangerous than the alternative.

Not that the Debates are over. The Western, Southern and Michigan festivals–whether from personal prejudice or economic prudence–all place more limits on public sexual display than some might like. The New England festival policy is unlikely to be reversed in the coming year. And *On Our Backs* is still condemned and banned as anti-feminist from some feminist women's bookstores.

But the shifting tide holds out promise–and a challenge–for the coming season. Sex radicals can deepen the inroads made to date by preserving a tolerance and generosity of spirit so lacking in their critics. Less on the defensive, sexual minorities have more room to break the cycles of escalating hostilities and set examples of conflict-resolution based, at least, on a mutual truce and, at best, on mutual respect.

The '85 festivals can mark scathing showdowns in the Sex Debates or unmistakable progress in shifting the terms of the debate to more fruitful ground. On the occasion of Michigan's tenth anniversary–surely a proud and happy moment–the festivals can again confirm and celebrate feminism's ability to embrace diversity without resort to sororicide. ◄

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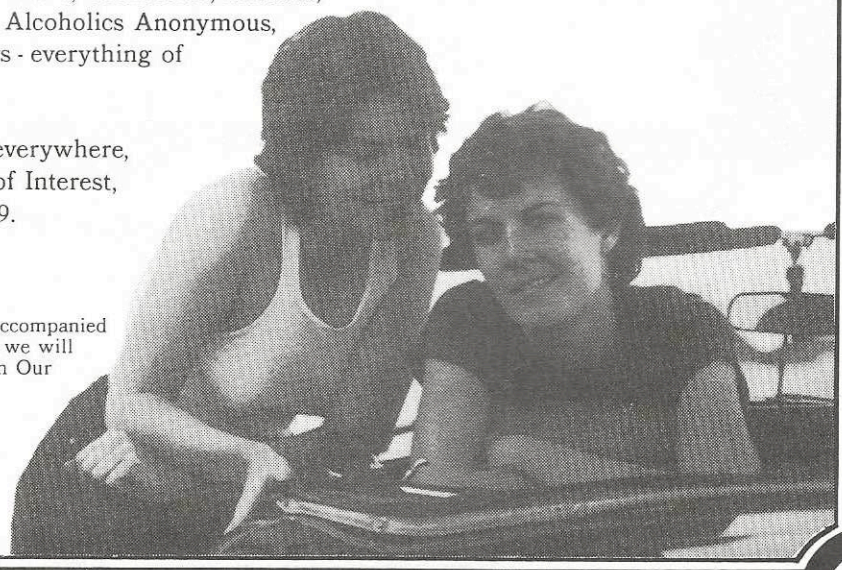

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CONTRIBUTORS

Dale Baron is a freelance San Francisco photographer who took last issue's much-loved cover photo of model Pepper. ■ **J.A. Cherry** is the art director of *On Our Backs*, a professional butch and photographer in quest of work. ■ **Giselle Commons** is a Northwestern erotic writer who contributed "Silvery Early Morning Light" to *On Our Backs*' first issue. ■ **Tee Corrine** is a legend in her own time. The photographer and designer of *Yantras of Womenlove* is also recently readable as a contributor to *Pleasures*, an anthology of womens' erotica. ■ **Honey Lee Cottrell** has been a regular contributing artist to *On Our Backs*. Her "Bulldagger of the Season" centerfold from our debut issue was featured this spring on a Playboy Video sex and news show. ■ **Fanny Fatale** thinks she owns this magazine. In reality, she's just a celebrated lesbian stripper whose outspoken views have appeared everywhere from the *Advocate* to the *National Enquirer*. ■ **Morgan Gwenwald** is a New York photographer who has been a frequent contributor to *On Our Backs*. Her first photo published in our magazine, "Even Femmes Go Down" has been one of the most popular and widely reviewed pieces we've ever published. ■ **Jupiter** revolves around the city of San Francisco. This summer she will spin out a 1986 calendar of her artwork. ■ **Lisa Kim** admits that this is her first overt attempt at erotica, inspired by a certain blonde woman and *On Our Backs*' last issue. ■ **Lanza** is our resident contributing cartoonist, also known in certain circles as an Oakland performance art celebrity. ■ **Barbra La Rue** wrote "Video Lesbiana" in our Fall '84 issue, a dyke review of adult entertainment. Her first personal ad 5 years ago read: "Gay Girl Bowler Seeks Instruction." She is still waiting for a reply. ■ **The Lady of the Lake** has dedicated her life to the principle that a woman can never be too fat or too poor. This has made all the difference. Some nights, she wakes up in hot sweats, fearful in her middle age she may be turning Butch. She believes any kind of sex is kinky (except what she happens to like) and wishes more women would write erotica to suit her personal needs. She has been published by almost every feminist and lesbian journal. She has been known to write a poem or two. ■ **wulf levine** . . . gives good phone. ■ **Dawn Lewis** is a San Francisco visual artist, originally from New Jersey. She was our cover photographer for Fall 1984. ■ **Sharon Page** is a bisexual feminist-radical who writes for *Gay Community News* and the *New York Native* while living for the moment in Chicago. She is currently at work on an educational slideshow to illustrate the range of sexual imagery appealing to pro-feminist women. ■ **Gayle Rubin** has been published widely on feminism, gay history, sexual politics, and S/M. She is a veteran of the sex wars and an occasional DJ. ■ **Barbara Ruth** is the author of "Olivia," one of our most popular stories, printed in the Fall '84 issue. She promises more stories about her notorious "hemophile" for the future. Barbara's work can also be seen in all the noteworthy lesbian sex publications. ■ **Jan Stafford** is a professional journalist who hopes that her soon-to-be-published sex novel, *Bizarro in Love*, will become an all time Cunt Classic. Nothing else but! ■ **Linda Stalter** welcomes portrait work from interested readers at her San Francisco address: P.O. Box 4714, San Francisco, CA 94101. ■ **Jess Wells** wrote "The Succubus" for her self-published novel, *The Dress, the Cry and the Shirt with No Seams*, self-published and distributed by Diaspora, P.O. Box 19224, Oakland, CA 94619.

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SERVICES

WANTED: BUTCH PACKERS
Tall, blonde, slutty, femme whore wants tall, handsome butch with tools for hot time. (Non-packers need not apply.) Masculine clothing is my fetish, so must have at least one good-looking costume (a suit) with the appropriate bulge. Yes, I am your fantasy come true, babe! Drawer #46

PERSONAL

TAKE OUT A **FREE** PERSONAL AD

PERSONALS

FEMME STUD
Tall, leggy brunette, 27, seeks intelligent, sexy, petite femme who wants a woman's hand inside her. If sex is nice, maybe we can be friends, too. Drawer #40, P.O. Box 421916, San Francisco, CA 94142

SUBMISSIVE AND YOUNG
Wants older dyke to take me in hand and make me theirs. All letters answered. Respond to *On Our Backs*, Drawer #41, P.O. Box 421916, San Francisco, CA 94142

TALL, DARK, HANDSOME
Lesbian, mid 30's, financially secure, seeks others for friendship, possible relationship. Drawer #42, P.O. Box 421916, San Francisco, CA 94142

TOUGH, ATTRACTIVE DYKE
24, 5'6", grey eyes, seeks wealthy, beautiful femme for adventurous sex in exchange for monetary assistance. I can cook, too. Drawer #43, P.O. Box 421916, San Francisco, CA 94142

S/M
Lesbian top, 31, newly relocated to Portland, OR, wants to meet and/or correspond with other s/m lesbians. P.O. Box 11679, Portland, OR 97211

PRETTY, PETITE, SLIM
27, bisexual woman would like to have a friendship/romance with another pretty bisexual woman or lesbian who is OK with my love of men, too. Drawer #44, P.O. Box 421916, San Francisco, CA 94142

AFFECTIONATE SADIST
Seeks massage slave. Other duties required. Must accept pain while bound in lingerie. No smokers. Box 497, Times Square Station, New York, NY 10108

SUBURBAN SIREN
Multi-faceted woman—impish, practical, deeply caring, silly, voluptuous (fat), brown-eyed, blithe spirit. I love music, theatre, reading and sex. Into fantasy and loving relationship. All you middle-aged, bisexual housewives, I know you're out there. Yoohoo! Drawer #45, P.O. Box 421916, San Francisco, CA 94142

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Write your reply to the woman you're interested in. Seal it in an envelope, with your return address in the top left-hand corner, and a first class stamp on the right. Write in her Boxholder Number in the middle of the envelope. Now fold this envelope and put it in *another* envelope, which you will address to *On Our Backs—Personals*, POB 421916, San Francisco, CA 94142. When we receive your reply, we will take out the inside envelope, and address it to the woman's real name and address. Then we will post it in the mail the next day. By following each of the steps to the detail, you will ensure your privacy, and get the speediest delivery.

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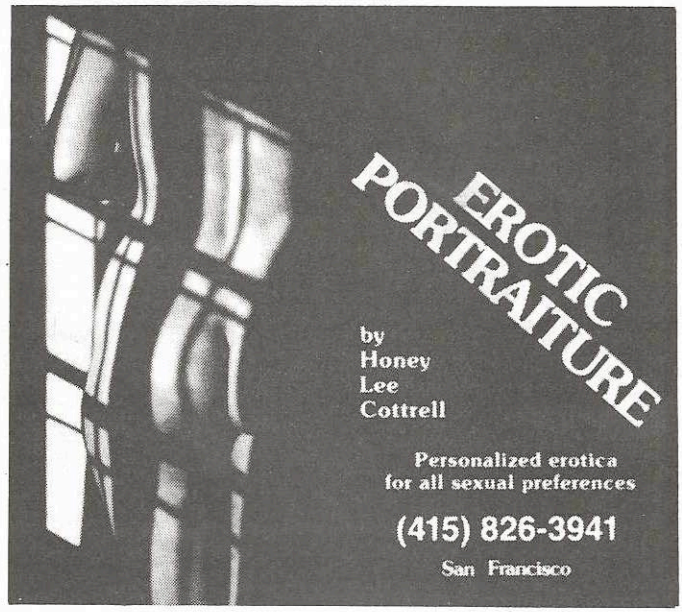

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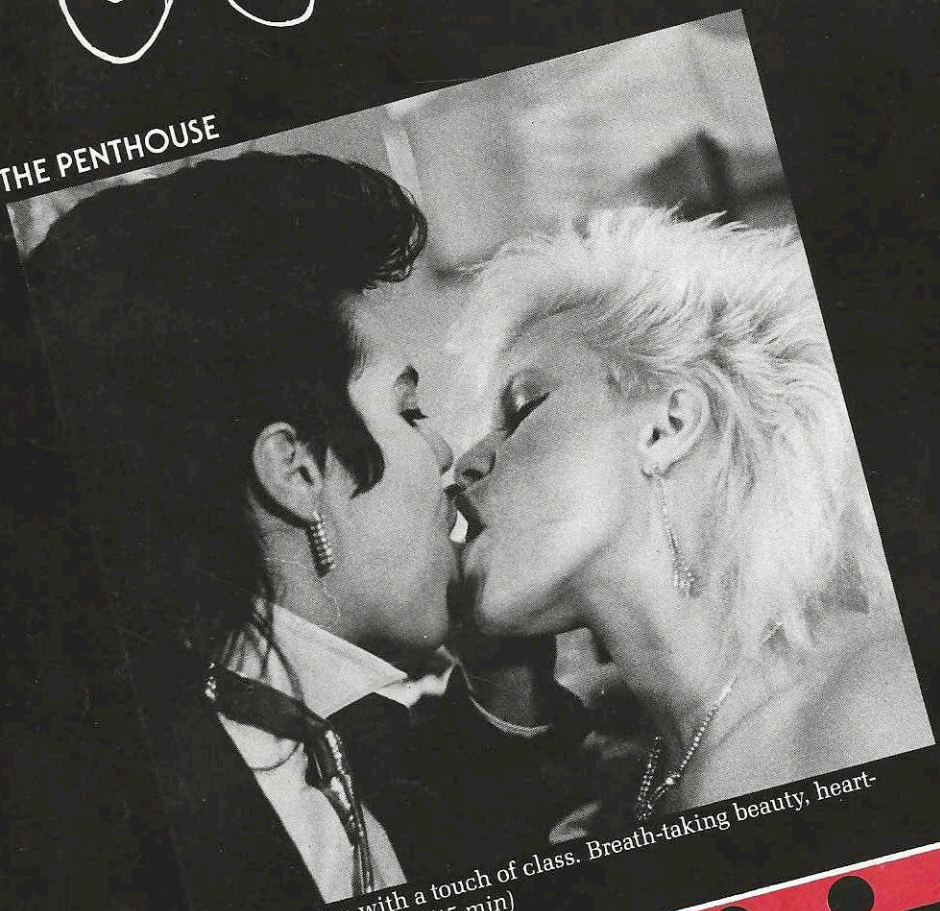

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